The Nonconformist movement in industrial Swansea, 1780-1914.

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THE NONCONFORMIST MOVEMENT IN INDUSTRIAL SWANSEA, 1780 - 1914

by
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D E D I C A T I O N .

To the memory of my mother , Annie Ruth Williams , who passed away soon after this dissertation was submitted .

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Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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SUMMARY

This is a study of Nonconformity in industrial society of Swansea from about 1780 to 1914. Chapter I sets the scene by describing the economic and social background. From the late eighteenth century, industrial growth taking place nearby in the districts surrounding the ancient borough of Swansea transformed the character of the entire area, and resulted in the creation of a series of industrial communities during the course of the following century.

The spotlight then turns upon Nonconformity. Earlier forms of the movement had existed in the district since the middle of the seventeenth century. Then, from the late eighteenth century, there was massive and sustained growth, which enabled it to become the dominant factor in the religious life of the locality by the middle of the following century. Subsequently, this position was consolidated and strengthened over the remainder of the century.

The next chapters focus on certain aspects of the movement within the locality. Chapter III examines Nonconformity as a religion, its characteristics, preoccupations and the reasons for its popularity. Chapter IV then outlines those cultural and educational activities which were an integral part of Nonconformity and which contributed so much to its appeal and to its importance.

Chapter V then considers Nonconformity and its relationship with the industrial society of the locality. Unlike the Established Church, the movement benefited from the emergence of the industrial society. This was because it was capable of providing the religious and other fundamental needs of a society experiencing traumatic change. However as the industrial society matured, these needs were diminished or were satisfied in other ways.

The study concludes by stating that the industrial society in Swansea was associated with a vigorous and diverse Nonconformist movement. However, this society, which had initially contributed considerably to the growth of Nonconformity also added to the problems and challenges facing the movement as the nineteenth century drew to its close.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BQ	Baptist Quarterly
Blue Books 1847	Reports, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the state of Education in Wales 1847
C C H M C	Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfiniaidd.
C C L	Cardiff Central Library
D W B	Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940
Education Commission 1861	Reports of the Assistant Commissioners appointed to enquire into the state of popular education in England 1861
Employment Commission 1842	Reports, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the employment of children and young persons 1842.
G C H	Glamorgan County History
H E A C	Hanes Eglwysi Annibynol Cymru, T Rees and J Thomas 5 cyfrol (1-4 Liverpool, 1871-5) and 5 (Dolgellau 1891).
H P N W	History of Protestant Nonconformity in Wales, T Rees, 2nd edition (London 1883)
J H S C W	Journal of the Historical Society of the Church in Wales
J W E H	Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History
N L W	National Library of Wales
N L W J	National Library of Wales Journal
Religious Census 1851	The Religious Census of 1851. A calendar of the Returns relating to South Wales Vol I, South Wales, I G Jones and D Williams (Cardiff 1976)
S W W I A S	South West Wales Industrial Archaeology Society Newsletter

T C H B C	Trafodion Cymdeithas Hanesyddol Bedyddwyr Cymru
T H S C	Transactions of the Honourable Society of cymmrodorion.
U.C.S.	University College Swansea.
Welsh Church Commission 1910	Reports, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the Church of England and other religious bodies in Wales and Monmouthshire 1910.
W G R O	West Glamorgan Record Office
W H R	Welsh History Review

PREFACE

Welsh Nonconformist history has hardly enjoyed the best of fortunes at the hands of historians. It is true that the output of writing on the movement during the halcyon days in the late nineteenth century was prodigious, with numerous chapel and denominational histories, along with the ubiquitous cofiannau [biographies]. However, much of what was produced was the work of reverend gentlemen whose passion for their cause was inevitably reflected in the style and content of their writings. These attitudes, together with the sometimes bitter interdenominational rivalries of the time prevented the adoption of a cool historical objectivity. The picture of Welsh Nonconformity which emerged was partisan, whilst many underlying questions were left unanswered.

However, if Nonconformist history has previously been the victim of much misplaced zeal, its fate during more recent times has been to suffer considerable neglect. Part of the explanation for this unhappy situation lies in the fact that much of the relevant material is in a language which is a barrier for many would be students. More important, however, is the secular minded attitude of many contemporary Welsh historians who view Nonconformist history with indifference, or even distaste. The interests and attitudes of such writers are reflected by the existence of Llafur, the journal of the Society for the Study of Welsh Labour History, or in the pages of the Welsh History Review, where religious history as a whole tends to be conspicuous by its

absence. It is particularly disappointing that the Glamorgan County History has devoted such little space to Nonconformity in those volumes in the series which cover the nineteenth century.

This situation is especially reprehensible because Nonconformity was of central importance to the Welsh experience in the nineteenth century. The views of many present day historians notwithstanding, Nonconformity was of intense interest to many Welsh people during that century. Moreover, it was a movement which at that time affected the vast majority, directly or indirectly, of the people living in Wales, whether they liked it or not. Nonconformity did not, after all, exist in a kind of vacuum, but was integral with the society of the time. There is, therefore, ample justification for a re-examination of the movement, not only for its own sake, but for what it may contribute towards understanding the society of nineteenth century Wales.

This immediately raises a problem : the diversity of society in Wales at that time. The obvious divisions based upon economic and cultural features hide a more complicated situation. Each community in Wales had its peculiarities alongside those characteristics which were also found elsewhere. This suggests that the study of Nonconformist history should be approached from a local, as well as from a wider perspective. Certainly, the study of Nonconformity in specific communities or regions within Wales has produced the most successful recent works on the

subject, such as those by E T Davies on the industrial valleys of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire[1], and I G Jones whose writings cover communities dispersed more widely throughout Wales[2].

The present study, deals with Swansea, with particular reference to its industrial communities where during the course of the nineteenth century a thriving Nonconformist movement existed. The nature of the society within this locality plays a large part in determining the lines of enquiry to be pursued. These include an examination of the impact of industrialisation upon Nonconformity, whether its progress was impeded or encouraged. Linked with this is the role of the movement within industrial communities, for which it has attracted much harsh criticism. At the very least, Nonconformity has been accused of ignoring many of the aspirations of the mass of ordinary people, and at worst, of deliberately impeding these aspirations. In short, this is submitted as a study of Welsh Nonconformity in the industrial society as it existed in one area of nineteenth century Wales.

PREFACE FOOTNOTES

1. Religion in the Industrial Revolution of South Wales (cardiff, 1965); Religion and Society in the Nineteenth Century (Llandybie, 1981).

2. Explorations and Explanations. Essays on the social history of Victorian Wales (Llandysul, 1981); Communities. (Llandysul, 1987).

CHAPTER 1

THE MAKING OF INDUSTRIAL SWANSEA

This is a study of Nonconformity within industrial Swansea from about 1780 to 1914. It is therefore necessary, as a preliminary, to understand the character of the industrialisation which took place in and around Swansea during that period, and its impact upon local society. The purpose of this chapter is thus to outline the nature of Swansea's industrial experience.

Swansea was not simply created by industrialisation, rather it was an old established town which had industrialisation grafted upon it. Also, industrialisation dealt rather more kindly here than was the case elsewhere in South Wales. The Swansea area actually possessed something of an industrial tradition long before the pace of development began to quicken towards the close of the eighteenth century. Moreover, that development was characterised by a greater consistency, and was less rapid than in the iron producing districts on the northern and eastern edges of the South Wales coalfield. This meant that the process of industrialisation had a less traumatic effect upon the local community than might have occurred otherwise. There emerged, too, a degree of diversity in the industrial economy of Swansea which made it unusual within the Welsh context. In addition, although many of the conditions in Swansea were found in other South Wales communities the local situation was by no means identical with

what existed elsewhere. The operation of the industrial economy was less severe than in other localities, as was reflected in the absence of labour conflicts to the extent that they occurred elsewhere. Finally, as a seaport, Swansea was more open to outside influences than were the inland settlements. Thus, diversity was as much a feature of the society and culture of the locality as it was of its economic life.

In 1787, Gabriel Powell, the all-powerful steward of the Duke of Beaufort, landowner and titular lord of Gower, stated before a House of Commons' Committee that Swansea was 'a poor town, mostly inhabited by coppermen and colliers'.(1) Indeed, industry was thereafter to dominate the life of the town to an ever increasing extent, yet Powell's description was something of a misrepresentation. In the late eighteenth century and for some years subsequently, Swansea, with its pleasant seaside location, enjoyed a reputation as a rather elegant resort or 'watering place'.(2) Consequently, many of the town's citizens believed that it was in this direction that Swansea's future lay. From the late eighteenth century, much was done to enhance the town's appeal for well-heeled potential visitors. Given the increasing popularity of sea bathing, particular attention was paid to providing the kinds of facilities which genteel folk would normally expect. Thus, in 1789 the town corporation took over and renovated the Bathing House which was situated on the seafront, some distance beyond the town itself. The improvements included

the provision of bathing machines, which were essential for respectable bathers. In addition, warm and cold seawater baths, such as those erected near the Cambrian Pottery works in the upper Strand helped alleviate the complaint that seabathing was only possible at high tide.

Along with improved bathing facilities, other amenities were also provided. The seafront, or Burrows, was tastefully landscaped to provide pleasant walks. For those of a sporting disposition, there was horse racing at Crymlyn Burrows, on the eastern side of the Tawe, as well as regattas and sailing races. Moreover, there was no need for visitors to complain of lack of indoor entertainment in the evenings, since the town came to boast of several theatres, despite the opposition of crusty old Gabriel Powell (d.1789) and the 'Methodists'. The earliest theatres were the 'Little Theatre', and 'The Star', both in Wind Street. Later, in 1807, the 'New Theatre' opened in nearby Goat Street. This was noted for the distinguished actors who trod the boards, giving memorable performances of Shakespearian and other plays. The quality of Swansea's theatrical life was indeed impressive. Many years later, Mr and Mrs S C Hall recalled these halcyon days.

> Neither may the Swansea Theatre be forgotten, although its palmy days are gone. On these boards have trodden the elder and younger Kean, here Charles Matthews made his first essay, here Macready donned the buskin when a boy, and here he bade farewell to the profession he had honourably upheld during the greater part of half a century;[3]

However, the pride and joy of many of Swansea's leading citizens were the Public Assembly Rooms, first mooted in 1804, and first used in 1821, when they included 'a commercial room, Library and Reading Room, Ball Room, Supper Room, Card Room and Billiard Room'.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to view life in Swansea in the early nineteenth century simply as a kind of Vanity Fair. During these years, this small provincial town witnessed an extraordinary flowering of culture and science, as illustrated by the activities of Calvert Richard Jones, pioneer of photography, John Dillwyn Llywelyn, botanist and zoologist, and John Henry Vivian, whose scientific achievements earned him membership of the Royal Society. The presence of such individuals led to the formation in 1835 of the Swansea Philosophical and Literary Society, which in 1838 adopted the more prestigious title of the Royal Institution of South Wales. Its stated aim was 'the Cultivation and Advancement of the Various Branches of Natural History; as well as the Local History and Antiquities of the Town and Neighbourhood for the extension and Encouragement of Literature and Fine Arts; and for the general Diffusion of Knowledge'. Swansea, too, was the home of The Cambrian, founded in 1804 as the first English language newspaper in Wales, and of Seren Gomer, the first Welsh language periodical, founded in 1814. The porcelain produced for an all too brief number of years at the Swansea Pottery is a permanent reminder of the high cultural standards which prevailed

in the town during these years. Of course, it was a culture in which only a privileged few could participate, but it meant that Swansea was always going to be more than simply an industrial town, even if that was to be its image for much of the century.

However, in the districts immediately to the north of the old town and franchise, individuals had long been pre-occupied with less glamorous pursuits. There, the chief natural attraction was coal, which, outcropping on the hillsides of the Tawe valley could be easily worked even with the simplest of techniques. Access to the sea was another advantage, since much of the coal was shipped elsewhere. In this respect there was a long tradition of industrial activity. As early as the sixteenth century, Swansea had been important for the amounts of coal which were shipped to destinations which included the South West of England, the Channel Islands and France.(4) The industry had traditionally been controlled by local landowners and their tenants. In the parish of Llansamlet, the principal landowners from the middle of the seventeenth century were a Briton Ferry branch of the powerful Mansel family. Bussy Mansel (1623-99) was particularly active in exploiting the coal under his Llansamlet estate.(5) A survey of 1686 records that Bussy Mansel and Hopkin Jones, freeholder, had been mining coal under the high road from Llansamlet parish church to the Tawe at Foxhole.(6) Since the middle of the century, this road had been known as 'ffordd y glo' [the coal way] because it was used to transport coal to the banks along the river.(7) By

the end of the seventeenth century the Mansels were the most important coal producers in Wales.[8]

However, the boom period in the Swansea coal industry came after 1700. This was brought about by the siting of copper and other non-ferrous smelting works in the Tawe Valley above the town itself. This began in 1717, when Dr John Lane, and his son-in-law John Pollard established their Llangyfelach copper works. Such works consumed vast quantities of coal; for many years eighteen tons of coal were needed to smelt four tons of copper ore out of which one ton of copper could be obtained.[9] Indeed, it was the availability of large amounts of cheap coal which helps to explain why these smelting works came to be located in the district and not near the copper mines.

The local land and mineral rights owners showed themselves fully aware of the benefits to be made from this situation. Initially, they made agreements to supply the copper smelters with coal, even providing sites on their own lands for the copper works. Thus, the Llangyfelach copper works was built on land held by Thomas Popkin of Forest, who was then granted the concession of supplying coal to the works.[10] Similarly in 1736 Bussy, fourth Lord Mansel, leased land for the building of the White Rock Copper works to a group of businessmen led by Thomas Coster of Bristol. Mansel even agreed to contribute towards the cost of the scheme in

return for receiving the right to supply the works with its coal.[11]

However, in time certain of those who operated the smelting works preferred to work the coal themselves, rather than rely upon the landowners to act as suppliers. In 1755 the Lady Louisa Barbara Mansel, heiress to the family estates in Llansamlet leased to Chauncey Townsend land at Middle Bank for the building of a lead smelting works. The terms of the lease stated that the coal needed for the works was to be mined by Townsend himself, from the Mansel estate, to which royalties were to be paid.[12]

The tendency for the proprietors of the smelting works to assume control over coal mining operations was also apparent on the western side of the Tawe Valley. There, by 1727, the Llangyfelach copper works had changed hands following the bankruptcy of its founders. The new owners included Richard Lockwood, M.P., of London, Edward Gibbon of Putney and Robert Morris, a native of Shropshire, who had originally been engaged as works manager by the previous owners.[13] Subsequently, the Lockwood-Morris partnership became actively engaged in securing mining concessions, particularly from the Duke of Beaufort, owner of the mineral rights over much of the district west of the Tawe. Thus in May 1746, they secured a ninety-nine year lease of the mineral rights in a number of localities, including the Trewyddfa district between Landore and Morriston.[14] This, and other similar

concessions encouraged the partners to establish a new copper works at Lower Forest, to replace the Llangyfelach works which was subsequently abandoned.[15]

Ultimately, this trend led some industrialists to abandon their interest in the smelting works and to concentrate instead on mining operations. This is what happened at the end of the century in the case of the Lockwood-Morris partnership. Then, shortly afterwards, the partnership was itself dissolved following the withdrawal of Sir John Morris I (1745-1819), who had inherited his father's industrial activities in 1768.[16] Subsequently, with the co-operation of the Duke of Beaufort, the coal mining assets of the former company were divided during the next four years between Sir John Morris II (1775-1855) and the Lockwoods.[17] In 1803, Morris launched upon his career as a coal owner when he formed what became known as the Landore Colliery Company. The Lockwood partners, who included Thomas Lockwood the elder of Middlesex, Thomas Lockwood the younger, also of Middlesex, and Henry Cotton of Oxford, became proprietors of the Penyvilia Vein Company which was formed in 1806. Meanwhile, in Llansamlet, Chauncey Townsend's successors, the Smiths, had become wholly concerned with coal mining some years previously.[18] These three colliery companies, Landore, Penyvilia and Llansamlet dominated coal mining in the locality for much of the early nineteenth century.

The mining operations taking place in the vicinity of Swansea towards the end of the eighteenth century were quite impressive by contemporary standards. The Lockwood-Morris undertaking at Trewyddfa had consisted of a complex collection of deep shafts and levels, scattered over the hillside between Landore and Morriston. The extent of the undertaking meant that a relatively high degree of technology was essential. Extensive use was made of steam power to drain the workings which were particularly prone to flooding. Thus, by 1766, a steam engine ('fire engine') had been installed at Plasmarl to work the six foot seam in that locality. However, by 1770, a deeper working required the installation of a more powerful engine which had a cylinder with a diameter of twelve inches. By the end of the century, an enormous Boulton and Watt steam engine, with a cylinder diameter of 63 inches had been installed at Landore. This was described by an expert witness as 'the largest single powered engine that was erected in the country'[19] and became something of a tourist attraction.

To facilitate the transport of coal within and from the colliery workings, a network of tramroads was constructed which after 1776 were equipped with iron rails from the well known Coalbrookdale ironworks.[20] These tramroads connected with the smelting works and the river at Landore, where dock facilities were constructed in 1772 under the direction of William Edwards, of bridge-building fame. Additional transport improvements followed, notably the construction of a canal in 1790, which extended from Morriston to

Landore, and which was incorporated in the Swansea canal, completed in 1798.[21] At the Clyndu level, Morriston, coal was actually transported from the coalface to the surface by means of an underground canal.[22] By 1794, the value of the entire concern was given as £100,000, from which the Duke of Beaufort received £2,000 annually in royalties and other payments.[23]

Likewise, in Llansamlet, the colliery undertakings founded by Chauncey Townsend were valued at £70,000 in 1797 by Henry Smith, his son-in-law and one of the co-owners. In 1810, the equipment at Llansamlet included two large fire engines and one smaller engine, all of which were used for draining waters from the workings. In addition, there was a fire engine for raising coal from a deep pit and a 'very extensive' water engine or water balance employed for the same purpose at another pit. Finally, there was a canal which had been built before 1786. This was the Llansamlet Canal which replaced an earlier tramroad extending from Llansamlet to the Tawe at Foxhole. The depth of the Llansamlet collieries was estimated at ninety fathoms, and this at a time when the average depth of Welsh coal mines was thirty to thirty-five fathoms.[24]

Coal was the essential basis for the industrialisation of the area, but the real jewels in the town's increasingly grimy crown were the non-ferrous smelting `works, pre-eminent of which were those which smelted copper. By the close of the eighteenth

century, seven copper works alongside the Tawe, plus certain others in the Swansea Bay region produced 7,000 tons of copper annually, which amount comprised ninety per cent of what was produced in Britain.[25] However, after 1800 developments took place on an even grander scale. These began with the foundation in 1809 of the Hafod Copper Works, which was carried out by John Vivian of Truro. Under his son, John Henry Vivian (1812-45), the works became one of the industrial giants of the period, and the basis of an industrial empire which comprised a considerable range of activities. Even bigger than the Hafod was the adjacent Morfa Works, which was opened in 1835 by Messrs Williams, Foster and Company who were also, like the Vivians, from Cornwall. The foundation of these works can be considered to mark that time when Swansea finally capitulated to the forces of industrialisation which had steadily been growing about it for many years previously.

During the remainder of the nineteenth century, the tide of industrialisation continued to rise. It is true that after 1860 copper smelting began its long slide into oblivion but this blow was softened by the expansion of other forms of non-ferrous smelting, notably zinc, which had for a long time been of only limited importance. Several of the old copper works, such as the Birmingham Works near Morriston took on a new lease of life as zinc smelters, alongside new works built for that purpose such as

that established near Llansamlet by the Villiers Spelter Company in 1873.[26]

However, perhaps the most important of the later generation of industries in Swansea was tinplate. The first tinplate works was established by William Hallam at Upper Forest, Morriston in 1845.[27] The growth of the industry was greatly stimulated by the open hearth process of steelmaking of Dr William Siemens, who did much of the development work at Landore, and where a steelworks to use the new process had been erected by 1869. The steel produced by the new process was preferred by tinplate producers to the alternative Bessemer steel. Subsequently, a number of tinplate works were established, in the Morriston and Llansamlet areas especially, along with those in other districts such as Cwmbwrla.

Unlike the non-ferrous smelting industry which had been controlled by outsiders, the tinplate industry was dominated by local men for the most part. An outstanding example was Daniel Edwards, who was born in Morriston in 1835.[28] Having received the education which was typical for working class boys of his generation, Edwards then embarked on a number of activities, including his father's trade of stone masonry. Then, there followed a period of employment in the local tinplate works where he acquired a practical knowledge of the industry. Thus equipped, in 1868 Edwards entered into partnership with two other local men, John

Jones and William Williams, the latter also to gain prominence in local life. This partnership became the Llansamlet Tinplate Company which proceeded to build the Worcester Steelworks in Morriston.[29] In 1873 Edwards branched out on his own to build the Duffryn Tinplate and Steel Works which was, for many years, a prominent feature of the local industrial scene.

The career of Daniel Edwards was paralleled by that of John Jones Jenkins, born at nearby Clydach.[30] In 1858, the twenty-three year old Jenkins became manager of the Upper Forest Works. Two years later, he was leader of a partnership which erected the new Beaufort Tinplate Works on the site of the old Forest Copper Works. Jenkins proceeded to a dazzling career in public life; he was mayor of Swansea on three occasions, as well as serving for a period as M.P. for Carmarthen. Finally he was raised to the peerage as Lord Glantawe in 1906[31].

The closing decades of the nineteenth century thus saw Swansea engulfed by industry. What was particularly noticeable was the diversity of Swansea's industries, in contrast to the situation which existed elsewhere in South Wales. This was summed up by a guide to Swansea written in 1880:

> Swansea, during the present century, has grown from the infantile dimensions of a fishing village to the comparatively respectable size of a fashionable watering place, until it has now arrived at the status of a great manufacturing and exporting centre. During the last thirty years it has made rapid strides onward until it has now become a vast workshop, with Sulphuric Acid, Patent Fuel, Alkali, Engineering,

> Railway Wagon, and other Works and Manufactories, and the fifth ship-owning port in the kingdom. It is the cradle of the copper smelting trade of the whole world. To Swansea is (sic) sent orders for copper from nearly every Government in Europe, and it is said the seven-tenths of the tin-plate trade of the empire has its birth in the manufactories of Swansea and its neighbourhood. Collieries are necessarily becoming very numerous, and an enormous quantity of coal is raised annually from the vast coal fields of the district, and thousands of tons of patent fuel is manufactured from the small coal which was formerly of little value.[32]

This diversity meant that the local economy was healthier, and less vulnerable than was often the case elsewhere in industrial South Wales.

Industrialisation was accompanied by a sustained expansion of the local population. Whilst natural increase affected the population of the country as a whole, the growth of industry meant that this trend was boosted enormously in Swansea. Industrialisation discouraged a possible drift out of the locality: certainly it attracted people to the area. It may also have caused an increase in the birth rate by encouraging earlier marriages.[33] Evidence suggests that 'the natural reproduction rate of local families must have been high throughout the century'.[34]

The population increase within the ancient borough was sufficiently remarkable by the end of the eighteenth century to be commented upon by contemporaries. In 1790, the local church

wardens noted the vast numbers of people in the district.[35] Miles Bassett, the long serving incumbent of St Mary's also remarked at the same time that 'the town was twice as large as when I took possession of the living at the beginning of the year 1757'.[36]

This statement was probably an underestimate, since the population rose from about 2,250 at the start of the eighteenth century[37] to 6,099 at the time of the first official census in 1801. Equally, if not more important was the increase in population in the adjacent industrial districts of Hafod, Landore, Morriston and parts of Llansamlet.

The trend thus began continued throughout the nineteenth century, and its progress can be followed by the decennial censuses. Table I, page 17, shows the increase in these parishes or sub-divisions of parishes which were most affected by industrial growth.[38] The rate of population growth, consistent from the start of the century was appreciably accelerating from about 1861.

The situation in the borough of Swansea needs to be considered differently. This is because the growth of population must be set against a background of periodic increases in the territorial extent of the borough. This began in 1835 when the municipal borough was formed by the addition of St John's parish, together with parts of Clase and Llansamlet, to the ancient borough of

Swansea. Further important extensions took place in 1867 and 1889. Table II, page 18, shows the population increase in the growing borough.[39]

The origin and character of the population were as important as its increase. One early source of information is the Swansea Statistical Survey of 1839, which was compiled by the Royal Institution of South Wales.[40] The value of this source as evidence is, however, diminished by the fact that it lists the birthplaces of heads of households only, and not those of their dependents. Even in this limited respect, its completeness is probably open to question. The survey should thus be regarded as providing only an indication of the origins of the local population, rather than a complete guide. Bearing in mind these cautionary remarks, the survey suggests that most people living in Swansea in 1839 were born locally, either in the borough or its immediate vicinity. Of the remainder, a number came from elsewhere in Wales, especially the south-western counties. There was only a sprinkling of people from outside Wales, most of whom came from Ireland and the south west of England.

A more reliable source is the Census. It is true that the Census of 1841 gives some information, but it is not until 1851 that a complete breakdown of the origins of the local population is supplied.

TABLE 1:
POPULATION GROWTH, 1801-91 : SWANSEA PARISHES

Year	Swansea*	St John's	Llansamlet Higher/Lower	Llangyfelach Clase.	Llangyfelach Penderry
1801	6831	322	2567	2549	717
1811	8963	276	2307	2822	778
1821	11236	806	2639	3344	830
1831	14931	690	3187	4783	1027
1841	19115	1037	3375	5924	1203
1851	24902	1215	4276	7302	1205
1861	33972	2738	5103	9436	1330
1871	43170	4713	6128	12887	1767
1881	55417	6271	8392	18882	2792
1891	60327	8389	9721	23887	4077

The ancient parish of Swansea was sub-divided into a group of smaller parishes during the nineteenth century

Source: Census figures 1801-1991 : Population Census of Great Britain

TABLE 2 :
THE MUNICIPAL BOROUGH OF SWANSEA : POPULATION

Year	Town and franchise only	Total (including St John's, St Thomas parts of Llangyfelach and Llansamlet
1831	13256	19694
1841	16787	24604
1851	21586	31461
1861	27161	41606
1871	33481	51702
1881	43015	65597
1891	48114	90349

Source: Population Census of Great Britain

Using this source, Table III, page 20, lists the birth places of the local population in the mid-nineteenth century.[41] This shows that little more than one half (57.3 per cent) of the population was born in the borough itself. The remainder was divided fairly evenly between those born inside (23.6 per cent) and those born outside Wales (20 per cent). Thus, the vast majority of Swansea's population was born in Wales in 1851. Even the Irish community represented no more than 4.2 per cent of the local population at that date. A further examination of the Census figures would reveal that less than one half of the adult population aged twenty years or over was actually born in Swansea.[42] Thus, in the mid-nineteenth century, Swansea was very much a magnet for people from a diversity of backgrounds and cultures. This would be true even of those from within Wales.

The situation in 1851 can be compared with that existing at the start of the twentieth century. In 1901, over 70 per cent of Swansea's population had been born either in the borough or in Glamorgan.[43] In addition, the proportion of Welsh born people was in excess of 80 per cent. However, these figures can be misleading, as will be shown below.

The distribution of the various linguistic and cultural groups was uneven throughout the borough. People tended to gravitate to those of a similar background. The central district of the borough, traditionally more anglicised than the outlying

TABLE 3 :
THE POPULATION OF THE MUNICIPAL BOROUGH OF SWANSEA IN 1851
BIRTHPLACES

Birthplace	%	Numbers
Town and franchise of Swansea	57.3	18024
Rest of Wales	23.6	7422
Carmarthenshire	8.2	2581
Pembrokeshire	3.0	937
Glamorgan	9 9.8	3074
Ireland	4.2	1333
England	13.9	4682
Total population		31461

Source: D.T.Williams

districts, attracted English speakers. The Irish were a particular case, establishing themselves in the Greenhill area, which formed a kind of transitional zone between the town centre and the industrial districts beyond. The central districts also attracted those born in Wales, including those from the highly cymricised areas. The upper town, especially around High Street and the railway station, appears to have contained a relatively high concentration of this group. However, the proportion of Welsh speakers, whilst giving a particular flavour to the area, was never sufficient to establish a linguistic dominance.[44]

Very different was the situation in the outlying districts of the borough. There, the majority of people were Welsh, by birth and language, and in most districts this remained the case until the very end of the century.[45] It was the absorption of these Welsh speaking communities within the borough in 1867 and 1889 which helps to explain the high proportion of people with Welsh origins in the 1901 census. The Swansea which included Morriston, Graig Trewyddfa, Treboeth, Fforestfach and Llansamlet was very different culturally from that which consisted of the central districts only.

The chief attraction of the industrialisation which was taking place in and around Swansea was that it provided many people with an improved opportunity of earning a living. Usually, there was a considerable gap between the earnings of industrial workers as

compared with farm labourers. Most, admittedly middle class commentators, agreed that the working people in Swansea's industrial communities had sufficient of the basic necessities of life. Thus, R R W Lingen, writing his Report for the Education Commission of 1847 quoted a local opinion that the copper workers were 'better off than any other class of workmen in the kingdom'.[46]

Within the industrial setting, wages were influenced by many variables. Workers in skilled or high shortage occupations could naturally command higher wages than those employed in more menial tasks. In the copper works in 1841, wages included twelve shillings for labourers, fifteen shillings for calciners, and twenty-five shillings for furnacemen. In addition, there were certain perquisites, such as free fuel and rented accommodation.[47] Children and females who made up a substantial proportion of the workforce in the copper industry received much lower wages, the payments for female workers ranging from seven shillings and six pence to ten shillings per week.[48] Meanwhile in the coal industry, colliers in the Swansea area were said to receive three shillings per day.[49]

Another factor was that of fluctuating economic conditions; slumps inevitably led to falling wages or even unemployment, a frightening prospect in the age of the workhouse. However, the copper industry was less subject to changing economic conditions

than other industries such as iron. Likewise the truck system, a major source of discontent elsewhere was not an issue of any importance in the Swansea area.

It goes without stating that such workers certainly earned their wages. The 1842 Report of the Royal Commission on Children's Employment provides a graphic picture of working conditions during the period. In the coal industry, shifts of twelve hours appear to have been normal.

> In the collieries of South Wales the hours of work are generally from 6 in the morning until 6 at night, including the time given to meals.[50]

The Report also states that those operating the rolling mills in the copper works had to work shifts of fourteen hours per day, from six.a.m. to eight.p.m. One special arrangement in the copper industry was that furnacemen had to work shifts of twenty-four hours, during which times they would be allowed rest periods.[51]

The nature of the industries in the Swansea area meant that the occupations within them were particularly demanding in terms of physical effort. Miners and smelting workers alike had to perform tasks made all the more arduous because of the conditions in which they worked. Moreover, these industries were especially unhealthy and dangerous. The effect upon the health of the workers of conditions in the copper industry was a topic which aroused

considerable attention during the early and middle years of the nineteenth century. However, the results of these investigations proved inconclusive, hardly surprising, given the implications for the local economy.

Thus J W Gutch, works surgeon of the Vivian Company concluded:

> I think it is fair to conclude that however disagreeable the [copper] smoke may be.....on man it appears certainly not to produce any baneful effects.[52]

However, a similar conclusion was reached even by those who were less closely connected with the industry. Dr Thomas Williams,, who combined ability with a reputation for integrity stated in an important report published in 1854:

> I should certainly be disposed to say that the men employed in the copper works and living almost constantly in the smoke are not more subject to disease than in other localities.[53]

There could be no doubt that many tasks in the smelting works which involved the handling of molten metal and razor-sharp sheets, often with inadequate protection, were inherently dangerous. Inevitably, however, it was the coal mines which had the least enviable safety records. The district avoided disasters on the scale which occurred elsewhere in South Wales, but those which it did experience were sufficiently serious. On 29th August 1787 eleven men were killed in an explosion at Pwll Mawr, Llansamlet. Subsequently, the fourteen members of the rescue party were also overcome by fumes but eight were revived by T Williams, a local doctor who received the medal of the Royal

Humane Society for his efforts.[54] A year later, sixteen people were killed by foul air 'at the colliery of Mr Smith' which may again have been Pwll Mawr.[55]

In 1827 this colliery was closed as the result of an explosion, though it was briefly re-opened in 1881. The toll of life appears to have been especially heavy in the Llansamlet collieries, for in July 1870 the Charles Pit near Llansamlet church suffered an explosion in which nineteen workers were killed.[56]

Possibly more serious in the long term were the numbers of miners who were killed in day-to-day accidents. These were reported with monotonous regularity in The Cambrian:

> Inquests were held on Wednesday last upon the bodies of William Williams, fifty-four, William Williams, eighteen, and David Holmes, aged ten, colliers working at the Pentre colliery who met their deaths in consequence of the explosion of hydrogen gas, or firedamp.[57]
>
> (24 July 1840)

> Inquest last Monday at the Traveller's Well Public House on the body of William Thomas, aged twenty-eight who had met his death in consequence of injuries received from an explosion of foul air...called firedamp which took place at the Weig Fach colliery on the previous Saturday.[58]
>
> (2nd May 1845)

> On Monday morning last, a young man named William Jones aged fifteen was descending Mynydd Newydd Colliery when within 30-40 yards of the end of his journey he slipped and fell to the bottom.[59]
>
> (16 November 1849)

It was little wonder, therefore, that the Mining Journal of 10 November 1846 could write that the South Wales coalfield was in danger of becoming a 'vast charnel house'.[60] Although, from the middle of the nineteenth century, measures were introduced to improve safety conditions in collieries, the industry remained fearfully dangerous throughout the remainder of the century.

Of the various categories of workers in Swansea's industries in the early and middle years of the nineteenth century, the sight of children and of female workers disturbed even contemporary opinion. The 1842 Employment Report states that in the copper works, the proportion of child employees was one sixth of the total workforce whilst that of females was one tenth.[61] Both these groups were employed to carry out the less skilled tasks, such as transporting materials. These duties, although lowly in both status and pay, were extremely arduous:

> Next to the calciners, the hardest work is wheeling coal and ashes to the smelting furnaces. This is mostly done by girls from 13 to 18 years.[62]

Boys were employed in a variety of tasks, such as cleaning around the machinery, as well as in certain parts of the production processes.[63] W P Evans, surgeon at the Hafod Works stated:

> The physical condition of the children employed at the Hafod Works is such as might be expected from them being employed in light work and receiving good wages and is consequently superior to that of those in the same neighbourhood who do not enjoy the like advantages.[64]

Others viewed the situation somewhat differently:

> We don't consider that the children are overworked here, but we don't think it is a fit place for girls to work at.....We should not like to bring our daughters up in the works.[65]

However, it was the employment of females and children in the coal industry which evinced the greatest concern. In South Wales as a whole, children comprised one third of the total workforce in the coal industry. Although women were commonly employed elsewhere in South Wales, this was not the case in the Swansea collieries.

> In this neighbourhood it has not been the custom to subject females to such degrading labours as those imposed upon them in the mines of the more eastern districts[66]

G Byng Morris, proprietor of the Landore Colliery stated in his evidence:

> No females are employed underground in the colliery.[67]

There were no apparent misgivings about the employment of children, many of whom began work at about eight years of age. These children began their working careers as door boys, opening and closing the ventilation doors. Their situation was described as follows:

> The air door boy is generally from 5 to 11 years of age: his post is in the mine at the side of the air door and his business is to open it for the haulier....In some pits the situation of these poor things is distressing. With his solitary candle, cramped with cold, wet, and not half fed, the poor child deprived of light and air passes his silent day.[68]

Older boys, were employed in transporting the coal using carts from the coal face where it had been cut. This work, known as 'tramming', often involved the use of a belt and chain, by means of which the worker would drag the cart behind him as he crawled on his hands and knees. Certain colliery owners were apparently anxious to make it clear that they did not make much use of this practice. Thus, G B Morris stated:

> In these works there are no children who, generally speaking, draw by the girdle and chain, although they may sometimes do it.(69)

Likewise Messrs Gregor and Martin of the Swansea Coal Company:

> No children draw with the girdle and chain, none of this class being required in the works, but strong boys convey or push the coals in the wagons 200 or 300 yards and work two together when required.(70)

It requires little effort of the imagination to appreciate the arduous nature of this work, as a representative of a colliery near Llanelli admitted:

> I consider the employment of carting [tramming] the most laborious to which the collier boys are put, it being hard and continuous work.(71)

The fact that virtually everyone, both young and old, male and female, faced the same tedious arduous and dangerous conditions helped to unite people in a kind of common bond. Moreover, the industries themselves demanded a high degree of teamwork to fulfil the industrial processes and also to ensure safety. In the tinplate industry, the millteam was the key unit within the production process. In the coal industry, the lives of the miners were very much dependent on the conduct of their fellow workers.

Such circumstances fostered a sense of mutual respect and an awareness of the interdependence of individuals. In short, the industries did much to create a sense of community amongst people whose sense of belonging had been disrupted by the changes which they experienced.

The growth of population as a result of industrialisation had important effects upon the nature and extent of urban settlement. Within the ancient borough, a considerable amount of infilling took place, so that spacious gardens disappeared under stone and mortar. In addition, pressure for accommodation meant that the built-up area began to extend northwards to take in upper High Street, Greenhill and Waun Wen, whose names now become somewhat inappropriate. Further away, the character of what had been rural districts with scattered populations began to change quite appreciably. On the lower slopes of the Tawe Valley, offering easy access to the smelting works, industrial villages began to appear, constantly eating into the open spaces which surrounded them. The degree of urbanisation tended to lessen with increasing distance from the old town, so that vestiges of the old rural character of the locality still existed above and beyond the new settlements for long into the nineteenth century.

The industrialists were very much involved in providing accommodation for their workers. One of the earliest, and possibly most interesting schemes was the large tenement building

which Sir John Morris I (1745-1819) built in approximately 1775 on the hilltop above Craig Trewyddfa. Most sources state that this property housed forty families although this figure may be exaggerated[72]. Unfortunately, the project proved to be less successful than its founder had foreseen and gradually during the course of the following century it was abandoned and allowed to deteriorate into a ruin, the so-called 'Morris Castle'.

More successful, however, was the township which Sir John Morris founded towards the close of the century and which still bears his name. The detailed planning of Morriston was carried out by William Edwards, the bridge builder, although the actual work of building houses was left to the would-be residents. The well known description of the new settlement written by Walter Davies (Gwallter Mechain) still bears quotation as the best available.

> [Sir John Morris] laid the foundation of Morriston, so called from the founder's surname; where dwellings have been erected for colliers and manufacturers in well formed and spacious streets; with a church (and) also a chapel. Only two or three thatched hovels once occupied where this neat little town containing a population of 1,100 now stands, a prominent feature of increasing wealth and comfort. Mr Fox, in the year 1796, says that in the year 1780 there was not a single house where Morriston now stands : that in 1796 there was 141 houses inhabited by 619 persons, so that in the last 16 years the population has nearly doubled.[73]

Subsequently, Morriston continued to expand and by the mid century its population had reached over 2000.[74]

At the lower end of the valley, J H Vivian took the initiative in developing the settlement which came to be known as Vivianstown (Trevivian) in the Hafod area. Writing in 1849, G T Clark provides this account of its development:

> Trevivian is the nucleus of a town situate on a hill a little more than a mile north of Swansea; it is the property of J H Vivian M.P. and it is inhabited by his workmen employed in the Hafod copper works; it consists at present of some 50 houses and a large pile of buildings containing immense school accommodation; there are about 30 additional houses in the course of being built.
>
> Near the [Trevivian] school 2 rows of 24 cottages have recently been built by Mr Vivian. Each has a long garden behind, in which, at a distance from the house was a privy and a pigsty, one to every house[75]

Similarly, on the opposite side of the valley, the industrialist Pascoe St Leger Grenfell was also responsible for providing housing and other amenities for his employees in the industrial settlement at Pentrechwyth known as 'Grenfelltown'.

However, much of this urban development was initiated during the laissez-faire years of the century, without any legislative control or regulation. Against this background, not everyone built houses of the quality of those of the Vivians at Hafod, which were described as 'ample in room, sound in structure, floored with dry bricks, roofed with tiles and partitioned into convenient compartments'.[76] Moreover, such developments took place when local government, even in Swansea, lacked the will, the means and the know-how to cope with the problems which arose.

In consequence, urban growth took place without any serious attention being paid to the need for the provision of basic amenities. Inadequate arrangements for the removal of refuse, severe water shortage, an absence of any drainage system worthy of the name, plus a sheer inability to cope with increasing housing needs led to the creation of new urban settlements which were ugly, insanitary, badly planned and overcrowded.

These conditions were described in detail in G T Clark's Public Health Report of 1849. This showed that in central Swansea, the most appalling conditions were to be found around the upper part of High Street, including Greenhill. Within this district was a network of alleys and courts, crammed with dilapidated, overcrowded houses which were totally lacking even the most rudimentary sanitary arrangements.(77)

Likewise, in the new and still growing industrial settlements, conditions were far from satisfactory. The streets and roads in Morriston were badly made and no arrangements existed for them to be kept clean. The houses were damp, because they were often built against the hillside. They lacked toilet facilities and people had to obtain water as best they could from springs and wells or even from the canal. Needless to state, many of these water sources were contaminated.(78)

Such conditions recurred elsewhere, at Landore and Mile End and at Foxhole and Pentreguinea. Of the latter two districts it was stated:

> The houses are for the most part niched into the hillside and are old, damp and very dirty and have no back premises. The water springs used by the lower cottagers are defiled by those living above them on the hill and the roads and gutters.....were in a filthy state.[79]

The almost inevitable result of these conditions was that sickness and disease occurred both endemically and epidemically throughout the district. In the mid nineteenth century, Morriston was said to be -

> ..scarcely without fever of some form or another.... which frequently breaks out epidemically and often with great virulence and fatality.[80]

Trevivian also had a history of epidemics, but after a particularly severe outbreak of scarlatina in 1845, H Hussey Vivian arranged for improvements to be carried out into the sanitation of the area which had a beneficial effect upon the standard of public health.[81] Elsewhere however, outbreaks of disease were part of everyday life. In Llansamlet, an epidemic of scarlet fever, which 'manifested itself in almost every house' led to the deaths of thirty-nine children in the autumn of 1849.[82]

The most feared disease for many years was cholera. This first appeared in Swansea in the summer of 1832, and it was believed to be responsible for the deaths of 152 people, according to The Cambrian before it finally disappeared[83]. Similar cholera

epidemics occurred in 1849 and 1866, causing 262 and 521 deaths respectively.[84] It is little wonder, then, that in 1854 only fifty four out of every hundred inhabitants of the borough of Swansea reached fifteen years of age.[85]

Such occurrences helped to shock the authorities out of their complacency into some sort of action. In 1850, a local Board of Health was formed which set about improving public health. Subsequently, its powers were strengthened both by national legislation and local by-laws, although it was not until 1875 that public authorities were able to demolish slum properties using the Artisans' Dwellings Act of that year. In Swansea much demolition work took place of property in the High Street area as well as around the parish church. However, the sheer scale of the public health problem meant that even at the close of the century much still remained to be done. In 1875, the life expectancy of those who reached adulthood was still only fifty-one years, whilst the life expectancy of the entire population was as low as twenty-four years. Such considerations can only have contributed to the development of a deep sense of insecurity, and even of fear in the minds of many, especially those who belonged to the poorer classes.

There was, however, a positive aspect to this depressing situation. As with industry, conditions in the new settlements contributed towards the development of a sense of community which

was to be a feature of the district as a whole. To cultural similarities was added a common sense of adversity. This sense of community was gradually increased by such factors as intermarriage, and by participation in local activities which could, of course, include religion.

The new housing and working conditions were the most obvious of the many changes facing those who inhabited Swansea's expanding industrial districts. However, the transition from the rural to the industrial society involved other changes which were equally real, even if they were less visible. The industrial society was free of that complex web of constraints and influences which moulded attitudes and behaviour in the more traditional rural society. In its early stages, at least, the industrial society was a featureless landscape without the familiar signposts to social behaviour. The influence of the landlord was much different from that wielded by the industrialist. Likewise, the clergyman was likely to be an even more remote figure in the industrial than in the rural community. Moreover, those constraints developed by the 'lower orders' themselves, such as the ceffyl pren could not be transferred to the new setting. However, the withdrawal of devices and arrangements for maintaining order were only part of that traditional culture which was largely left behind by those who had abandoned the rural society. It is little wonder, therefore, that individuals experienced a sense of bewilderment and of loneliness and

insecurity in their new surroundings. Feelings of doubt and apprehension could only be exacerbated when these new surroundings did not deliver what was expected of them.

It may well be that social circumstances encouraged people to seek comfort and assurance from religion, and that the major beneficiaries were the Nonconformists because of the shortcomings of the established church. At the very least, this may provide part of the explanation for the remarkable growth in Nonconformist Christianity which took place in the Swansea area from the late eighteenth century. However, against this must be placed the tendency for the poorest, most deprived sections of society to reject religion altogether. To those apparently most in need, religion failed to act as a palliative. Thus, the relationship between Nonconformity and the new industrial society which was emerging in Swansea is far from simple. Its significance must be assessed by considering other influences, as well as that relationship itself.

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CHAPTER 2

THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF NONCONFORMITY IN SWANSEA

TO 1850

At the end of the eighteenth century, the local Anglican clergy were dismissive of all forms of Dissent in the Returns which they regularly submitted to their bishops. Thus, in 1799, William Davies, curate of Llangyfelach stated:

> There are many Dissenters of many denominations..... I have the satisfaction to state that their number have decreased of late years.[1]

His counterpart in Llansamlet reported in a similar vein.

> ..there are a few Dissenters, they have no meeting house and I think their numbers decrease.[2]

This same person, writing of the situation in St John's parish, of which he was also curate, stated:

> There are a few of the Baptists and Presbyterians but no meeting house.[3]

Finally, the incumbent of Swansea parish concluded his remarks on the local Dissenters by stating that 'Their numbers decrease'.[4]

Within half a century of these remarks being made, Dissent, or Nonconformity, had captured the religious allegiance of the majority of worshippers in Swansea and its immediate neighbourhood, and the Anglican church seemed destined to become an irrelevance. The purpose of this chapter will be to trace the

growth of this movement and to consider its development in relation to the Established Church.

The golden age of Nonconformity in Swansea was during the nineteenth century, but a tradition of Dissent had existed in the town and part of its neighbourhood for some two hundred years previously. What happened in the Swansea area in the nineteenth century was to an extent less explosive, less of a break with the past than might otherwise have occurred. Much of the explanation for this long-standing tradition of Dissent is to be found in the weaknesses of the Anglican Church. Given its location on the periphery of the diocese, the Swansea district was, in ecclesiastical terms, a remote fringe area where the maintenance of ecclesiastical discipline would always present problems. The fact that the area was situated above all on the margin of St David's seemed to exacerbate this situation, since this was one of the largest dioceses in the whole of England and Wales.

However, geography was not the entire explanation for lack of spiritual supervision. In a diocese whose poverty and lowly status made it one of the least regarded in the Church, the bishops were often absentee and those appointed to the office rarely remained for any appreciable length of time. Between 1621 and 1626 it was held by that devout and loyal churchman, William Laud, but even he spent very little time in the diocese. No less than eighteen bishops were appointed to the diocese between 1705

and 1800.[5] The division of the diocese into four archdeaconries represented an attempt to grapple with the problem, but this failed to achieve the desired results and had become 'long disused' before the end of the seventeenth century.[6]

The parish system did little to counteract these weaknesses. It was most effective where the parish covered only a limited area, and where settlement consisted of nucleated villages whose inhabitants lived conveniently near the church. Under these circumstances it was relatively easy for the clergy to provide appropriate pastoral care and supervision. However, the parishes in and around Swansea were far from conforming to this model. The tiny St John's parish, with its mere 431 acres was an exception to the rule probably caused by being carved out of the adjacent Swansea parish during the late Middle Ages.[7] The parish of Swansea itself included not only the borough, but a much wider area besides, since it extended westwards from the Tawe river as far as Blackpill stream, and northwards from the seashore to the Lliw river and Burlais brook. In addition, from at least the seventeenth century, the parish came to include the hamlet of St Thomas in Kilvey, thus making up a total of 6890 acres.[8] The remainder of the area on the eastern bank of the Tawe belonged to Llansamlet, a long straggling parish which extended as far north as Glais and which likewise amounted to over 6000 acres.[9] Despite its size, Llansamlet was treated as part of the parish of Llangyfelach until 1841.[10] Consequently, the incumbent of

Llangyfelach was responsible for appointing a curate to serve in Llansamlet, which arrangement continued well into the nineteenth century. Even without Llansamlet, the parish of Llangyfelach was enormous. It covered some 27,000 acres, extending from the Tawe on the east to the Lliw river on the West, and from St John's in the south as far as Bettws in the north. It was, par excellence, the unmanageably vast Welsh parish, with all the difficulties that this involved.

These considerations were all the more serious because the Swansea area was more vulnerable to outside ideas and attitudes than much of the remainder of Wales. This was because of the degree of anglicisation which had long existed in the town and even parts of the adjacent districts. As a seaport, the town of Swansea was bound to receive more than just the commodities carried by merchant ships. Commercial links meant that Swansea was in regular contact with the English ports of the Channel, including Bristol, which during the first half of the seventeenth century was a Puritan stronghold.[11] It is little wonder, then, that Puritanism, which belonged essentially to English religious tradition, made more progress in Swansea than in many other parts of Wales.

A factor which further encouraged the development of Puritanism in the Swansea area was the support given by a number of prominent landowning families. The Cromwellian Colonel Philip Jones of

Llangyfelach was for much of the Civil War period the most powerful individual, not only in Swansea, but in the whole of South Wales. His Puritan sympathies were shared by his brother-in-law, John Price of Gelli-hir in Gower, both men being commissioners appointed under the Act for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1650. A near neighbour of John Price was Rowland Dawkins of Kilvrough [Cilfrwch]. Dawkins served as a colonel in the parliamentary army and his three daughters, in keeping with Puritan custom, bore Biblical forenames[12].

It is, therefore, hardly coincidental that the earliest signs of Puritan sympathy came from those Gower parishes which contained the properties of influential individuals sympathetic to the movement. In 1636, the vicar of Penmaen, Marmaduke Matthews, angered the ecclesiastical establishment because of his 'advanced' views, and was forced to give up his living[13]. In 1642, the parishioners of nearby Pennard succeeded in securing the appointment of Ambrose Mostyn to the post of lecturer in the parish, for which he was expected 'to preach every Lord's day in the forenoon and afternoon'.[14]. It was in this part of Gower, too, that the Puritan movement achieved a major success when a Baptist Church was established at Ilston in 1649. This, the first of its kind in Wales, was primarily the work of John Miles, a native of Newton Clifford in Herefordshire, and not far from the Olchon Valley where the Baptist movement in Wales is traditionally held to have originated. The Ilston Baptist church played a key

role in the years immediately following its foundation, with branches being set up over a wide area of South Wales.[15]

Within the town of Swansea Puritan activities took place, initially with the encouragement of the corporation, and later with that of Parliament. Steps were taken to ensure that Puritan clergy were appointed to the parishes of Swansea and St. John's, and their efforts were augmented by a system of itinerant clergy who were active throughout the district. This official campaign to promote Puritanism was accompanied by the efforts of those who acted on their own initiative. Thus, Ambrose Mostyn is credited with founding an Independent 'gathered' church in the town. This may have been as early as 1642 or later during 1646-48, when Mostyn was appointed by Parliament to serve at St Mary's.[16] The cause appears to have flourished, and in 1657 it secured a site for a meeting house in High Street through the generosity of one Christopher Rogers. Of concern to all was the emergence of a small but vociferous Quaker movement, which survived despite universal hostility and which even established a meeting place, also in High Street, in 1656.[17]

These activities took place within the relatively anglicised communities in the town of Swansea and the Gower parishes. However, Puritanism was by no means confined to such localities. In the predominantly Welsh speaking parish of Llangyfelach, the movement succeeded in attracting adherents, possibly through the

influence of Colonel Philip Jones. Whether these Llangyfelach Puritans formed a separate church during the Cromwellian period is open to doubt, however.[18]

In comparison with other parts of Wales, Puritans could afford to feel a measure of satisfaction with the progress which they had made during the Civil War period in the Swansea area. Inevitably, perhaps, the retribution which accompanied the Restoration took its toll after 1660. The flourishing Baptist church centred upon Ilston suffered especially; it was practically dismembered, and its leader, John Miles left for America in 1663.[19] Indeed, Puritanism virtually ceased to exist in those districts within the Gower peninsula where it had made such initial progress.[20] Nevertheless, the movement as a whole survived in other parts of the Swansea district, a tribute to its resilience as well as to the fact that the degree of persecution varied considerably over time. Indeed, the town of Swansea gained a reputation as a place where religious dissidents were openly tolerated. Thus, the veteran Marmaduke Matthews continued to preach despite his ejection from St John's.[21] Another active figure in the town's Dissenting movement was Daniel Higgs, a native of Bromsgrove who had held livings in the Gower area before his ejection from the Church.[22] Henry Maurice, writing in 1675 states that Higgs was at that time pastor of the Independent Church 'that meets at Swansea.[23]

Further light on the local situation is shed by the religious census of 1676. This shows that in the town and parish there were 292 Dissenters against 1500 Anglicans. In fact, the figure for the number of Dissenters is considered to be an under-estimate but it still means that Swansea contained the highest concentration of Dissenters in Wales.[24]

The census did not attempt to distinguish between different types of Dissenters. In any case, the difficulties of the period meant that the differences between the main groups within the movement were becoming blurred. This was especially true of the Independents and Presbyterians; the Baptists, with their insistence on believers' baptism were more distinct. Nevertheless, the congregations which met for worship during these years tended to be of a rather mixed character.

In the absence of purpose-built meeting houses, services were held usually in private houses. This had been facilitated, albeit only temporarily, by the 1672 Declaration of Indulgence which allowed Dissenting ministers to obtain licences to conduct services at specified places. One such licence was granted to Daniel Higgs in April 1672 'to be a congregational preacher at his house in Swansea'.[25] Another permitted the Baptists, now led by Lewis Thomas of Newton Nottage, to hold services at the home of one Harry Dykes.[26] However, it appears that the most frequently used Baptist meeting place was the home of Rees ab Ifan in a

district known as Heol las, better known in later years as the Washing Lake.[27]

Dissenters were also to be found outside the town. They included the remnants of the former Ilston Baptist Church. Even more numerous, however, were the Independents who were strongest in Llangyfelach parish. They were the dominant element in a congregation which had met at Cilfwnwr farmhouse from at least `1666, when they chose Robert Thomas of Baglan to be their pastor.[28] The Llangyfelach congregation was part of a wider movement scattered throughout West Glamorgan. It continued meeting at Cilfwnwr until April 1700, when the death of the occupant of the farm forced the congregation to move to the adjacent Tirdwncyn farm.[29]

The survival, and indeed growth of this Independent cause at Llangyfelach deserves further consideration as a means of understanding the character of Dissent, and of its appeal to certain individuals. It may well be that in this case, at least, the nature of the locality was of considerable importance. Tucked away in a remote isolated district, those who gathered at Cilfwnwr, and later at Tirdwncyn, were in less danger of harassment than might otherwise have happened. This point can, however, be exaggerated; isolation did little to safeguard the Baptists of Ilston. More important was the fact that the movement emerged in the kind of large upland parish where the influence of

the Anglican clergyman was, at best, limited, at worst, non existent. In such a locality the influence of the landlord, that other defender of traditional patterns of behaviour was also diminished. Such circumstances might have fostered a more independent attitude amongst the ordinary inhabitants than elsewhere, and a greater readiness to embrace religious unorthodoxy.[30]

The difficulties of these Puritan Dissenters were considerably eased by the Toleration Act of 1689. Almost immediately, the Presbyterian-Independent congregation which was still served by Daniel Higgs took over a building on the eastern side of Swansea's High Street, which was to serve as their new meeting house.[31] However, this accommodation soon proved insufficient for their needs, so they decided to move further down High Street to a new site in 1697-8.[32] Their original meeting house, now vacant, was subsequently taken over by the local Baptists [O hyny allan, yr oedd ganddynt addoliad cyhoeddus yn y dref].[33] This property, known simply as the Old Meeting House [Yr Hen dŷ Cwrdd]. was to remain in use by the Baptists as the centre of their activities for the next hundred years.[34] In addition, the Quakers, who had almost vanished into oblivion during the 'time of troubles' re-emerged and established a meeting house, also in High Street, slightly to the north of that of the Baptists.[35]

These activities were not reciprocated outside the town, however. It may be that poverty, or even a willingness to continue with existing facilities provide the explanation. It was not until many years later, in 1762, that the then strong Independent Church in Llangyfelach chose to abandon Tirdwncyn for a new chapel at Mynyddbach.[36] The importance of this cause cannot be over-estimated. It was to be the source of all the Independent churches which emerged from the late eighteenth century, including those which were the largest and most powerful within the local Nonconformist movement.

As the eighteenth century advanced, the 'old' Dissent, dominated by Presbyterian Independents and Baptists occupied a reasonably secure, if subordinate place in the religious life of the district. Instead, it was the 'New Dissent' of Methodism which took the lead as an active evangelizing force. The linguistic character of the Swansea area provided opportunities both for the indigenous movement and that which originated in England. Welsh Methodism attracted adherents in the area almost from its outset, aided no doubt by regular visits by Howel Harris after 1739.[37] Perhaps rather surprisingly, the earliest significant advances were made in Llansamlet, where there was little or no tradition of Dissent. Almost inevitably, information regarding the beginnings of the movement tends to be rather confused. It appears, however, that a Methodist society [seiat] first began meeting as early as 1739 at a local farm named Waunllysdy, or Wernllestr.[38] By

1742, following Howel Harris' first visit to Llansamlet, meetings were being held in a locality called 'Y Cwm', where the accommodation consisted of two adjoining cottages.[39] The term 'capel' was applied to this meeting place which subsequently became known as Capel y Cwm.

English Methodism emerged following the arrival of John Wesley, who in 1758 paid the first of a series of visits to the area.[40] Not surprisingly, Wesley concentrated his efforts in those districts where English was most frequently used. Thus, in the town of Swansea, an English Methodist cause came into existence, possibly in 1769.[41] This met for a time in the 'Old room' [yr hen room'] in Castle Street, a popular venue for several of the town's Dissenting groups. From there, the cause moved in 1771 to its first chapel which was situated in the upper part of the town.[42]

The closing decades of the eighteenth century witnessed the transition from Dissent, a movement which appealed to only a minority of the local population, to Nonconformity, a movement whose appeal was much wider. For a period of about 20 years from 1780, the rate of growth increased appreciably, with new causes being founded, whilst those already in existence expanded considerably. The process thus began continued during the nineteenth century. The speed of growth varied, with the years of marked increase being interspersed with those when growth was

slower. Growth also varied within the movement itself: within some denominations it was enormous, whilst in others it was only moderate.

The growth of the movement after 1780 was experienced both in the town of Swansea and in the adjoining districts. In the town, it was not only the rate of growth, but its variety which was particularly noticeable, possibly a reflection of the mixed character of the population. Thus, in 1789, a group of English Methodists who were opposed to the Arminianism of their Wesleyan brethren were provided with land upon which to build a chapel by Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, who sympathised with their beliefs.[43] The Lady Huntingdon Chapel, in the then fashionable Burrows area of the town was opened in 1789, the same year in which the main body of Wesleyan Methodists took over a site for their new chapel in Goat Street in the centre of the town.[44] This was a significant move because the Goat Street chapel was to be the home of the Wesleyans in Swansea for very many years. The example set by the English Methodists was subsequently copied by the Welsh Methodists, who in 1799 took the important step of building their first chapel, Crug Glas, on the outskirts of the town at Greenhill.[45] Many years before, Howel Harris had preached in this locality, where according to Welsh Calvinist tradition he had barely escaped with his life. Then, in 1803, the local members of Mynyddbach Church decided to found a separate cause in the town itself.[46] The result was Ebenezer Independent

Church, which opened its doors for the first time in May 1804, at which time it was described as being 'un o'r capeli mwyaf yng Nghymru' [one of the biggest chapels in Wales].[47] For the town's Baptists, who were riven by those disputes which were taking place within the movement as a whole, the closing years of the century were less happy. However, the new Back Lane [Heol Gefn] church, founded after 1785 as a split from the original Baptist Church at the Old Meeting House [Yr Hen Dŷ Cwrdd] in High Street was a pointer to the more expansive times which were to come.[48] In fact, the only causes which failed to produce any of the fresh green shoots of growth were the two nearby congregations of Presbyterian- Independents and Quakers.

Dissent was also making considerable progress in the districts adjoining the town. By 1780, a Dissenting congregation had emerged in the Plasmarl area, meeting in an old colliery engine house from which it derived its name, The Engine Church [Eglwys yr Engine].[49] The nature of this cause is particularly difficult to establish, although it was for a time after 1787 a member of the Baptist Association. However, in the districts which lay on the western side of the Tawe, in the parish of Llangyfelach, the chief Nonconformist influence was that exercised by the Independents from their stronghold at Mynyddbach. Indeed, the 'Engine' may well have begun as a split from Mynyddbach.[50] Throughout these years, Mynyddbach was a cause of gathering strength, as was testified by its increasing membership, which

reached a total of 231 in April 1792.[51] The chapel itself, was enlarged in 1797 to cope with this increase so that it became 'un o'r capeli helaethaf yng Nghymru y pryd hwnw' ['one of the largest chapels in Wales at that time].[52]

In addition, the Mynyddbach church was also establishing branch chapels elsewhere in the district. In the Morriston area, local members of Mynyddbach, together with Calvinistic Methodists, had for many years met for services in a building known as Y Tŷ coch.[53]. Now, with the development of the industrial township of Morriston, this was replaced by a new Independent chapel known as Libanus.[54] This new chapel was primarily the work of William Edwards, the person employed by Sir John Morris to assist in the planning of his new township. Edwards, in addition to being a builder and town planner, was also a Dissenting minister. To him, the advantages to be gained from establishing a chapel in the new township must have been obvious. Consequently, he overcame the objections of Lewis Rees, the long-serving minister of Mynyddbach, who feared that the unity of his church was being threatened, and even sweetened the pill by raising funds to pay for the scheme himself.[55]

The foundation of Libanus persuaded the Calvinistic Methodists to abandon Y Tŷ Coch for a meeting place near the market of the new township. It appears that after 1795 this group was augmented by a number of Independents, who had become disaffected by the

autocratic behaviour of Lewis Rees, especially the restrictions which he placed upon the services to be held in Libanus.[56] Indeed, this congregation was encouraged and assisted by John Davies of Gwern Llan, Llansamlet, the son-in-law of Lewis Rees and himself an Independent minister. By 1802 the congregation felt sufficiently strong to build a chapel, named Philadelphia, on a nearby plot of land.[57] The character of the new cause was for some time in doubt, but by 1804 it had been accepted into the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Association.[58]

In Llansamlet, the situation was less complex, since there the Calvinistic Methodists were in an even more dominant position than the Independents on the opposite side of the valley. A clear sign of their increasing strength appeared in 1782, when they built their new meeting place, Salem, more familiarly known as Capel y Cwm, after the old meeting place, which was a short distance away.[59]

This growth subsided during the opening decades of the nineteenth century, to judge by the number of new causes which were founded. In the town a second Independent church was established at Castle Street in 1814, but this owed much to the divisions which arose amongst the congregation at the Presbyterian-Independent Church in High Street when it finally converted to Unitarianism.[60] More significant was the foundation of the first Welsh Wesleyan cause in 1812. This was Tabernacle church which met in Tontine

Street.[61] The foundation of this church, in a district where other denominations were already established, was a bold gesture which achieved only a limited degree of success. One later writer described the progress of the cause as 'feeble',[62] yet it survived until it was replaced by Alexandra Road Church in 1884-5, although the latter was an English cause.

Outside the town, progress during these years was also somewhat muted. In the expanding industrial district of Morriston, Libanus, the daughter chapel of Mynyddbach continued to prove adequate for the needs of the local Independents, whilst the Baptists were insignificant. It was the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists who appeared to be making most progress, for in 1812 their chapel, Philadelphia, was enlarged so that it could accommodate a congregation of over 300 people.[63] Elsewhere, in Llansamlet, the Independents did, however, make a notable step forward with the foundation of their first cause in the district in 1818. This cause, known as Bethel, owed much to the efforts of John Davies, the local Independent minister who had done so much to assist the Calvinistic Methodists in Morriston.[64] Bethel, like Libanus in Morriston, was an outpost of Mynyddbach, by which it was controlled for a number of years.

After 1820, the pace of growth was stepped up. An early indication came in 1824 with the foundation of Dinas Noddfa church by the Baptists of the Trewyddfa and Plasmarl areas.[65] The

Baptists of this district formed a rather nebulous group which may have included survivors of the ill-fated 'Engine' church which had collapsed a few years previously, along with local members of Back Lane Church, Swansea, and even a few Independents. They had met for some years in makeshift premises in a local works, where the services had been led for a time by John Ryland (Ieuan Ddu'), the son of Rev Joseph Harris ('Gomer') the well known Baptist minister of Swansea. Under his successor, William Rees of Foxhole, the group became strong enough to build their own chapel and to constitute themselves as a church.[66]

The foundation of Dinas Noddfa was followed by a period when growth reached a new intensity. This was due, in part, to the important revival of 1828, but the process was already under way before this event took place. In the town, the Baptists gave notice of their increasing strength with the foundation of an English language church, later known as Mount Pleasant. This project owed much to the efforts of the Welsh Baptist leader, Rev Joseph Harris. It is ironic, however, that the foundation stone of the new chapel was laid on the same day as his funeral, in August 1825.[67] Five years later, a disagreement amongst the congregation of the new church caused a section to leave and establish themselves at York Place, as the second English Baptist church in central Swansea.[68] At the same time, the Welsh Baptist church at Back Lane, now under its new minister Daniel Davies, the successor to Joseph Harris, decided on an ambitious

plan of rebuilding on a new site. The project began in 1830 and a year later, the new Bethesda Chapel opened its doors for the first time.[69]

The other denominations in the town were not to be outdone by the progress which the Baptists had made. In 1826, Ebenezer Independent chapel was enlarged to cope with the steady increase in its attendance figures.[70] The Methodists, too, were making considerable strides. In 1824, the English Methodist chapel in Goat Street was extensively rebuilt.[71] However, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists chose to go further, and build a completely new chapel on a new site to replace their existing chapel at Crug Glas, which by 1827 was too small and too far away from the centre of the town. The result was Trinity chapel, built on a site known as the Ropewalk, near the market place, and which opened in April 1829.[72] Crug Glas then continued to serve in a subordinate role as a schoolroom. Even the Welsh Wesleyan church whose attendance in the past had fluctuated considerably, now experienced happier times as was reflected in the construction of a new gallery at the Tabernacle chapel in Tontine Street.[73]

Outside the town, all the major denominations could also point to new causes or to important developments in those already in existence during these years. Thus, in 1828 those members of Back Lane Baptist church who lived in the lower part of Llansamlet parish, decided to found a separate cause in their own locality

which would avoid the tedious and often difficult journey to the chapel in Swansea. The result of their efforts was Tabernacle Baptist church, Pentrechwyth, which began life in 1829.[74]

Meanwhile, in the Morriston area, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists were enjoying considerable success, as was evidenced by the further rebuilding of their chapel in 1829 to cope with increasing attendances.[75] Similar activities took place at the nearby Libanus Independent chapel soon afterwards. However, perhaps the most important advance made by the Nonconformists in the industrial districts during these years was the foundation of Siloh Independent church at Landore. This had originated in 1822, when local members of Mynyddbach began holding meetings at various addresses in the locality. Then, in 1824, the group built a schoolroom known as Y Coleg [The College]. By 1828 the cause had become sufficiently strong for it to become a fully fledged church, and a chapel adjacent to the original building was completed in the following year.[76] In the midst of all this activity, the statement made by Henry Williams, curate of Llangyfelach, that the Nonconformists were not increasing in numbers even though 'they compass sea and land to make proselytes' almost beggars belief.[77]

The almost frantic pace of growth which had taken place since 1824 slowed down considerably during most of the following decade, as the Nonconformists sought to consolidate what they had already

namely Ebenezer, Llwynbrwydrau. This was formed in 1834 as a daughter church of Salem Capel y Cwm and was a further indication of the dominance of the Calvinistic Methodists over much of the Llansamlet district.[78] Elsewhere, the young Dinas Noddfa Baptist church at Landore disintegrated amidst a welter of doctrinal controversy, and the building passed into the ownership of a Wesleyan group.[79] Nevertheless, the gains made in the previous years were indisputable. It was not merely that so many causes had been founded, but that attendances in many cases were so large. A letter presented in The Cambrian in 1834 from 'Dissenter', described by the newspaper as 'a respectable inhabitant', supplies the following figures about chapel attendances in the industrial district of Llangyfelach parish[80].

TABLE 1. Attendances at selected chapels, 1834

Chapel	Denom.	Average attendance	Members	Sunday school
Mynyddbach	Indep.	800	400	150
Morriston	Indep.	500	250	100
Siloh,Glandwr	Indep.	500	160	200
Morriston	Calv.Meth	700	250	200
Dinas Noddfa	Wesleyan	50	12	50

The accuracy of these figures is, of course, open to question, as a correspondent who signed himself as 'Churchman' pointed out in a

letter in the same newspaper some weeks later.[81] Yet there are ample grounds for accepting that the more prominent chapels were attracting congregations of such large numbers during these years. When it is noted that the membership register of Ebenezer Independent Church, Swansea, lists its membership in 1838 at 428, such figures became quite credible.[82]

One noticeable feature of the chapel congregations of these years is that their membership was constantly changing, to judge by the surviving records. At Ebenezer, the addition of new members was accompanied by the departure of others, in some cases only after a short period of membership. This situation can be explained, in part, by prevailing economic circumstances: just as some came into the district in search of employment, so others were leaving. In addition, individuals were frequently excluded for disciplinary reasons. Thus, one Charles Davies of the 'Plough and Harrow', Pentre, who became a member of Ebenezer on the 27th March 1842, was excluded on 6 September in the same year.[83] Similarly, Jemima Davies of Cae Pishtill, who was received into membership on 15 August 1841 was excluded on 27 February 1842 for 'dancing'.[84] A similar picture is provided by the records of Caersalem Newydd Baptist Church which was formed in the outlying district of Treboeth.[85]

From 1838 the rate of activity increased as Nonconformists sought to keep pace with the expanding population. Indeed, during the

1840s religion became deeply embedded in the consciousness and conduct of many individuals.[86] A notable feature was the appearance of the first Primitive Methodist church in the district. This was Tower Lane church, established in central Swansea in 1838.[87] The arrival of this break-away section of the Methodist movement does not seem to have threatened the Wesleyans. More serious was the dispute which arose at the Goat Street church and which led to one section of the congregation leaving to establish a separate cause known as Belle Vue in 1840.[88] Nevertheless, those who remained were sufficiently confident to embark on an ambitious project to completely rebuild their chapel, a task which indeed taxed their resources to the hilt and was not completed until 1847. The ranks of the English Methodists were further strengthened by the emergence of an English Calvinistic Methodist church. This apparently began when a section of the congregation left the Huntingdon church in 1845.[89] Assistance was provided, not unnaturally by Rev Howells, minister of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists at Trinity, until eventually a new English Methodist church known as Bethel was established in Edward Street in 1847.[90] Shortly afterwards, in 1851 the church obtained the services as minister of Rev William Williams who continued in that capacity for many years.

The other denominations in the town all added to their strength during these years. The Welsh Independents set about the task of establishing an additional cause in the town centre by holding

meetings in Victoria Rooms in Oxford Street. These meetings were conducted by Thomas Davies, previously of Ebenezer and one of the more colourful ministers of the period. In 1843 Capel Seion duly appeared.[91] Five years later, the site upon which the chapel stood was acquired by the owners of the South Wales Railway, by whom it had been earmarked for the projected High Street Station. The congregation consequently moved further down High Street, where they built a second chapel in 1850. The Independents also established a cause known as Zoar, in upper High Street in 1849.[92] This appears to have originated as the result of disagreements amongst the Independents of the district, rather than in response to growing need.[93] A similar situation arose amongst the Baptists at Bethesda, following which a disaffected element founded Bethlehem Church, Greenhill in 1850.[94] Finally, the Unitarians appear to have participated in the general progress when they rebuilt their chapel in High Street during 1846-7.[95] Truly, during these years High Street could be described as 'a street of chapels'.

However, during this period the most significant developments were taking place in the industrial districts which lay beyond the centre of the town. The Independents, by tradition the strongest of the denominations in the district as a whole, were busy establishing additional causes in a number of locations. In January 1839, a new cause known as Bethlehem began in the emerging colliery village of Fforestfach.[96] At the same time, the

Independents in the Foxhole district of Llansamlet parish decided to sever the links which had bound them to Mynyddbach since the days of Lewis Rees and proceeded to found a separate cause which they named Canaan[97] Two years later, in June 1842 Siloam Independent church was founded in Pentre Estyll.[98] This was a particularly astute move, since the new cause was located midway between Ebenezer, in Swansea, and Siloh, Landore, and was well placed to attract adherents from the developing communities of this district. The first minister was Thomas Davies, the former minister of Ebenezer who at the same time filled a similar role at Capel Sion. Later in the same year a second Independent church, Horeb, was established in Morriston. This was largely the work of Thomas Davies, a local preacher who then became the first minister of the cause, which office he retained till his death in 1894.[99] Horeb formed a useful addition to the Independent movement in this increasingly populous area. The establishment of these churches meant that by the middle of the century virtually every community within the entire area was within fairly easy reach of an Independent cause.

The founding of these new churches can have gone only part of the way to restore the morale of local Independents following the unhappy events which took place between 1838-9 at Mynyddbach itself, and which revolved around the character and conduct of its minister;[100] indeed it appears that they originated, in part at least, from those events. However, the most immediate and direct

consequence was that a large section of Mynyddbach's congregation left in 1840 to found a new cause nearby, known as Caersalem Newydd. After a period of indecision this became a Baptist Church.[101]

Caersalem Newydd was one of a number of Baptist churches founded to serve the industrial communities during this period. In 1838, the former Dinas Noddfa Baptist chapel, which, it will be recalled, had been taken over by the Wesleyans was purchased and re-opened as a branch of Bethesda Baptist Church. A later history of Dinas Noddfa contained in the church book stated:

> 'Yn y pryniad hwn y mae hanes y bedyddiwyr Neilltuol yn dechrau yn ei gysylltiad ar eglwys'[102]
>
> [In this purchase the history of the Particular Baptists began its connection with the church.]

This relationship continued until 1846 when Dinas Noddfa became a separate church. The transfer of seventy-five members from Bethesda helped strengthen the cause.[103]

These years also witnessed a long overdue attempt to bring the Baptist movement to Morriston. As a result of the efforts of Bethesda and Caersalem Newydd, regular meetings began in the area in 1843. The infant cause was nursed for the next two years by Caersalem, until the new Seion Baptist church was formed in September 1845 with its membership of fourteen individuals.[104]

Seion was one of those churches founded before a chapel had been constructed, which occurred in this case in 1847. Unfortunately the initial progress of the new cause was undermined by a split when a disgruntled element left to form a new cause nearby, known as Zoar.[105]. This, however, proved to be short-lived.

The Baptists could afford a degree of satisfaction with the progress they were making in the western side of the valley; on the opposite side their achievements were much less substantial. The new Adulam Baptist church, founded in 1848 in Bonymaen owed less to the increasing popularity of the movement in that district and rather more to disagreements in the existing Baptist church in the area, which was Tabernacle.[106] A more shadowy cause was Hebron. This was listed by the Welsh Church Commission as an English Baptist church which was founded in St Thomas in 1840.[107] However, this may be a case of mistaken identity, since all other references to Hebron, St Thomas, suggest that it was a branch of the Calvinistic Methodist Church at Salem, Capel y Cwm.[108]

Surprisingly, the Baptists neglected the Cwmbwrla district during the years before 1850. In doing so, they left the way clear for the Calvinistic Methodists who had been increasing their activities in that area since the 1830s. A tangible sign of their efforts came in 1845, when local members of Trinity Church, Swansea built a schoolroom known as Y Babell.[109] Thus

originated the prominent Calvinistic Methodist church of the same name which appeared a few years later.

The Religious Census 1851

The declared objective of the Religious Census of 1851 was to find out:

> How far the means of religious instruction provided in Great Britain during the last 150 years have kept pace with the population during the same period, and to what extent those means are adequate to meet the spiritual wants of the increased population of 1851.[110]

This was done by listing the places of worship then available, their accommodation, and the use made of that accommodation on Sunday, 30th March 1851.

The Census has always been a controversial document, both to contemporaries for whom it was a weapon to be used in the denominational conflicts of the time, and subsequently to historians. Each of the items enumerated in the Census has been shown to be inaccurate to varying degrees. This margin of error undermines its value, especially when it is used as a source for studying localities, rather than the country as a whole. However, these inaccuracies should not be exaggerated. It is probable that the Census compares more than favourably with other sources as a provider of statistical information about religious provision in the mid-nineteenth century.[111] Thus, it well merits

considerable, if cautious attention as evidence for what Nonconformity had achieved in Swansea by 1851, and what it subsequently needed to achieve.

It is generally agreed that the Census is least contentious where it is concerned with listing places of worship. It should be noted that in the Swansea area, almost every Nonconformist place of worship denoted a separate church or cause, rather than a branch or 'preaching station' of another. Such places of worship usually consisted of specifically designed buildings, whether known variously as chapels [capeli], houses of worship [addoldai], or meeting houses [tai cwrdd]. The Welsh Wesleyans who met in Morriston in a building 'not used exclusively as a place of worship' were exceptional in this respect.(112)

In listing places of worship, the chief weakness is that of omission. In the Swansea area, the Census makes no mention of Hebron Baptist Church in St Thomas, although this appears in the list produced by the Welsh Church Commission of 1906-10. The Swansea Baptist Church which met at the Old Meeting House is also omitted. This cause, although admittedly in its death-throes, was still in existence in 1851; the Swansea Guide for that year describes it as 'the Welsh Unitarian Church which meets in Baptist Court'.(113) Short-lived causes which disappeared before 1851, such as the 'Engine' Baptist church which existed for a time in the Landore area also do not appear. Otherwise, the list of

Swansea Nonconformist meeting places contained in the Census is complete. One minor irritant, however, is that the dates of foundation of certain of the meeting places can be misleading. Thus, the Census states that the foundation date of Ebenezer Independent chapel, Swansea, was 1826, whereas in fact the correct date is 1804.[114]

More important, the foundation date of a place of worship as supplied in the Census is not always a guide to when the church itself was formed. Thus, the Baptists had established churches in Swansea before 1800 although this is not evident from the Census. It is with these cautionary remarks that the total number of Nonconformist meeting places in the Swansea area as listed in the Census is presented. The information is shown in Table II below.

TABLE II **Nonconformist meeting places in Swansea in 1851 (including the town and parish of Swansea, St John's, Llansamlet, and in the hamlets of Clase and Penderry in the parish of Llangyfelach)[115]**

Population : 38,900

	Number
Before 1800	9
1801-51	35
Total	44

The next step is to produce an analysis of these figures in terms of the various denominations.

TABLE III The Religious Census of 1851: the denominations in the Swansea parishes or sub division of the same[116]

Denomination	Meeting Place	Meeting Place	Total
	To 1800	1801-51	
Independents	3	12	15
Baptists	-	11	11
Calv.Methodists	2	6	8
Wesleyans	1	5	6
Huntingdon	1	-	1
Primitive Meth.	-	1	1
Unitarians	1	-	1
Quakers	1	-	1
	9	35	44

The relatively high proportion of churches already in existence before the boom period after 1800 is clearly illustrated by these figures.

The first point to emerge from Table III is the denominational diversity within the area, with the old established denominations being joined by others of more recent origins. Secondly, there was a considerable variation in the numbers of churches founded by these denominations. The Independents had been most active in this respect, followed by the Baptists who, despite their rather late start outside the central area of the town, had managed to stay ahead of the Calvinistic Methodists. The progress of all

three denominations stands in marked contrast with that of the Unitarians and Quakers.

The Census also provides information about the accommodation provided by the local places of worship, along with their usage. However, it must be accepted that in these respects the accuracy of the Census leaves much to be desired. The information was provided by ministers or by chapel officials who were not necessarily familiar with what was required. Moreover, the instructions with which they were provided were vague and open to a variety of interpretations. Thus, accommodation could mean seating only, or it could also include standing room. Again, there was uncertainty as to whether accommodation referred to that available for the main body of the congregation or whether this should also include the Sêt fawr [big seat] occupied by the deacons. It is possible that the accommodation figures, supplied by people acting out of goodwill and for the best of motives, were in many cases based on little more than generous estimates. In the Swansea area, certain chapels did not even provide figures, whilst the entry for Siloam Independent chapel, Pentre Estyll can only be described as perplexing.

> ....."Eight Yeards Square", others 58'[117]

Similar problems arise in relation to the attendance figures. It is not necessary to accept the allegations made at the time, that there was a deliberate attempt to exaggerate, but it would seem

that many of the attendance figures were also no more than generous estimates. Some indication of the errors likely to be present come from the minister of Ebenezer Independent chapel, Swansea, who stated:

> Most people would suppose we had 800 people last evening by viewing the assembly, but when numbered they were found short of 500.[118]

It must also be emphasised that the attendance figures give the number of visits, rather than the numbers of visitors attending services on Census Sunday. Given that many individuals would have attended more than one of the services held on that day, the figure for the total number of visits would bear little relation to the total number of visitors.

Therefore, the Census has, to put it mildly, severe deficiencies if it is used as a means of establishing the precise numerical strength of Nonconformity as a whole, or of those denominations of which it was comprised. Instead, the Census figures have been used to calculate the religiosity of different localities by compiling an Index of Attendance (IA). The formula most widely employed by historians for this purpose consists of the total attendances at the services as a proportion of the total population of the locality.[119] Of course, the errors contained in the Census will be reflected in the Index of Attendance, so that the picture which emerges can only be an approximation.

Table IV shows the accommodation and attendance of local Nonconformist chapels, both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the total population of the area. In addition, for purposes of comparison the figures for the Established Church are also included.

TABLE IV **Religious accommodation and attendance in the parishes of Swansea, St John's, Llansamlet and the hamlets of Penderry and Clase in the parish of Llangyfelach[120]**

Population : 38,900

Denomination	Places of worship	Accomm.	Accomm. Rate	Attendance Rate	IA
Nonconformist	44	18513	47.6	24220	62.2
Anglicans	8	5575	14.3	3995	10.5

Looked at in isolation, the figures relating to the Nonconformists were rather disappointing, especially the accommodation figures. The extent of their achievement can only be appreciated when the figures produced by the Nonconformists are set alongside those of the Anglicans. It was the Nonconformists, and not the Anglicans who had contributed the lion's share towards ensuring that the area had an accommodation rate slightly above 58 per cent. This was the figure which Horace Mann, the official responsible for organising the Census had fixed as being that percentage of the community for which accommodation should be available after

excluding such groups as the old, the infirm, and the very young.[121]

Accommodation and attendance can also be used to provide some indication of the relative strengths of the various Nonconformist denominations in Swansea during the mid nineteenth century. These figures are presented in Table V, page 77.

It can be seen that the Independents were quite clearly the strongest of all the denominations, in terms of their chapel accommodation and attendances. The Baptists were in second place in terms of the numbers of chapels, but in respect of accommodation and of attendance they were outnumbered by the Calvinistic Methodists. The Wesleyan Methodists had established a relatively large number of causes but apart from the English Wesleyan Church in Goat Street, and its Welsh language equivalent, Tabernacle, both found in central Swansea, they were small in terms of accommodation and attendance.

TABLE V Religious accommodation and attendance in Nonconformist denominations in the parishes of Swansea etc.[122]

Population : 38,900

Denom.	Meeting Places	Accomm.	Rate	Attend-ance	IA
Indep.	15	7463	14.1	10839	27.8
Baptists	11	3936	9.5	4832	12.4
Calv.Meth	8	4015	8.6	5517	14.1
Wesleyans	6	1554	3.9	1432	3.6
Huntingdon	1	650	1.6	1050	2.6
Prim.Meth.	1	300	0.7	410	1.1
Unitarians	1	400	1.0	328	0.8
Quakers	1	195	0.5	35	0.1

Finally, the Census can be used to uncover the distribution of Nonconformity within the Swansea area in the mid nineteenth century. Table VI, below, shows the accommodation and attendance figures for the movement as a whole.[123]

TABLE VI Statistics of accommodation and of attendance in Nonconformist churches in the parishes of Swansea, St John's, Llansamlet, and the hamlets of Clase and Penderry in the parish of Llangyfelach.

Population : 38,900

Parish etc	Pop.	Accomm.	Accomm. Rate	Attend.	IA
Swansea	24902	10925	43.8	12382	49.6
St John's	1215	552	45.4	952	78
Llansamlet	4276	2085	48.7	3509	82
Clase	7302	3588	49.1	5937	74
Penderry	1205	1363	113	1663	138
	38900	18513	60	24443	84.3

It will be noticed that the Accommodation Rate over much of the area was remarkably similar. At the same time, this figure increased with distance from the town itself. This trend appears markedly in Penderry, most of which was rural and which was in fact, very much on the periphery of the Swansea area.

Perhaps more significant than the amount of accommodation was the usage. Here, it will be seen that there was a marked contrast between the situation in the town compared with that in the surrounding districts. In the town, the Index of Attendance was, at 49.6 per cent disappointing and well below the target figure suggested by Horace Mann. However, in the surrounding areas the situation was very different with Penderry again being top of the list. This is something which will require further consideration in due course. It may well be that the industrial districts around Swansea had more in common with the rural hinterland than with the town itself. In districts such as Llansamlet and Clase, the rural element was still significant. The powerful influence which religion exercised in rural Wales was present, albeit in a somewhat diluted form in the rural-industrial districts around the town centre of Swansea.

Table VII, page 79/80, shows the distribution of the individual denominations. Within the town, the degree of denominational diversity was quite considerable, and embraced many shades of opinion and practice. This probably reflected the greater social

and linguistic diversity within the town relative to the surrounding areas. Thus, the English language denominations would have found the linguistic barrier too intractable a problem in the outlying districts for them to have made any real impression at the time.

TABLE VIII Distribution of Nonconformist denominations in the parishes of Swansea, Llansamlet, St John's and the hamlets of Penderry and Clase in Llangyfelach Parish.[124]

(A) Swansea Population: 24,962

Denomination	Meeting Place	Accomm.	Rate	Attend.	IA
Independents	6	3413	13.7	3988	16.00
Baptists	5	2384	9.5	3176	12.6
Calv.Method.	4	2167	8.7	2063	8.3
Wesleyans	4	1416	5.6	1332	5.3
Primitive Meth.	1	300	1.2	410	1.6
Huntingdon	1	650	2.6	1050	4.2
Unitarians	1	400	1.6	328	1.3
Quakers	1	195	0.8	35	0.1
	23	10925		12382	

(B) St John's. Population: 1215

Denomination	Meeting Place	Accomm.	Rate	Attend.	IA
Independents	1	552	45.4	952	78

(C) Llansamlet. Population: 4276

Independents	2	961	46.1	1371	32
Baptists	2	126	6.0	231	5.4
Calv.Meth.	2	998		1907	44
	6	2085		3509	

(D) Clase. Population: 7032

Independents	4	1750	24	3464	46.8
Baptists	3	850	12	826	11.7
Calv.Meth.	2	850	12	1547	21.1
Wesleyans	2	138	1.9	100	1.4
	11	3588		5937	

(E) Penderry. Population: 1205

Independents	2	787	65.3	1064	88.3
Baptists	1	576	47.8	399	49.7
	3	1367		1663	

Consequently, in districts such as Landore, Morriston, and Llansamlet, the Nonconformist movement consisting of the 'Big Three' of Independents, Baptists and Calvinistic Methodists held sway. The Independents were the largest denomination in the greater part of the area, as they were in the town itself. It was only in Llansamlet that they had failed to capture the leading position, having instead to defer to the Calvinistic Methodists. Even in Llansamlet, the strength of the Independents was by no

means inconsiderable, however. Meanwhile, the Baptists were the second largest denomination overall, but their strength was rather more patchy. In the important Morriston district, they were weaker than both the other leading denominations, and in Llansamlet their position can only be described as dismal.

Within the constraints to which reference has already been made, it is probable that the explanation for the distribution of the denominations within the industrial communities was mainly influenced by the activities of the denominations themselves. The clearest illustration is that of the Calvinistic Methodists in Llansamlet. This was a district in which the Calvinistic Methodists established themselves comparatively early, and in the absence of any competition from other movements, they were they to achieve a dominant position. A similar situation arose in Morriston, where the Independents were able to capitalise on the early lead which the foundation of Libanus in 1782 had given them to ensure that they became the most powerful denomination in the locality.

To 1906

The extent of the Nonconformist achievement by the mid-nineteenth century is undeniable, especially if compared with that of the Established Church during the same period. Nevertheless, much remained to be done, the first of which was the task of ensuring

that more and more people were brought within the Nonconformist fold. This could only be achieved by increasing the facilities which the movement could offer for worship.

Consequently, after 1851 Swansea Nonconformists continued in their efforts to increase the number of places of worship. This involved a major programme of chapel building. A local witness who appeared before the Welsh Church Commission of 1906-10 supplied a list of the chapels built between 1852 and 1906 in what came to be the Swansea County Borough. This information is shown in Table VIII below.

TABLE VIII New chapels built in the Swansea County Borough, 1852-1907.[125]

1852 - 59	3
1860 - 69	12
1870 - 79	16
1880 - 89	16
1890 - 99	9
1900 - 07	10

Apart from new chapels, those which were already in existence were in most cases extensively enlarged or rebuilt during the period, in some instances on more than one occasion. Amongst the Independents the chapels at Ebenezer, Swansea (1862)[126], Mynyddbach (1865)[127], Siloam Pentre Estyll (1865)[128], Bethlehem, Cadle (1866)[129] and Horeb Morriston (1869)[130] were considerably enlarged within a short time of each other. However,

some chapels went even further. The Welsh Independent Church at Libanus, Morriston, decided to build an entirely new chapel some distance away in the main thoroughfare of the locality. This was the origin of Tabernacle Chapel, completed in 1872 and capable of seating a congregation of 1,450 people, truly a giant amongst giants.[131] The example set by the Morriston Independents was followed by those at Landore, where the existing Siloh chapel was suffering considerable inconvenience following the construction of the new South Wales railway line. Consequently, it was decided to construct an entirely new building on a more suitable site. When the appropriately named New Siloh [Seilo Newydd] duly appeared in 1878, it was on a scale only slightly smaller than Tabernacle, having a seating capacity of 1,100.[132] Situated on top of the steep slope overlooking Landore it became the most prominent feature of the local landscape.

If the Independents could claim responsibility for the most impressive chapels in the district, the Baptists too, could afford a sense of achievement resulting from their activities in this respect. Nearly all of the older Baptists chapels were rebuilt, and the resultant chapels at Seion Morriston (1871), Caersalem Newydd (1873), Mount Pleasant, Swansea (1875-6) and Dinas Noddfa, Landore (1884), all belonged to the first division.[133] Baptists in the eastern side of the valley, although less numerous, also participated in this general trend by rebuilding their chapel at Adulam in 1878.[134] Their neighbours, the Calvinistic Methodists

at Salem Capel y Cwm, rebuilt their chapel probably more times than any other cause during the entire nineteenth century; at the end of the period, in 1903, they finally embarked on a scheme to rebuild their chapel completely on an adjacent site[135].

Despite these efforts, the challenges facing the Nonconformists of Swansea tended to increase rather than decrease. Firstly, the population was increasing, and doing so at an accelerating rate during the second half of the century. Secondly, many of the newcomers came from further afield, and helped to inject a large non-Welsh speaking element into the local population. In many cases too, their religious experience was as different as their language.

Naturally, the influx of large numbers of English speakers presented the least problems for these sections of Nonconformity which were already anglicised, such as the Wesleyan Methodists, who could look to the future with a renewed confidence. More surprising, perhaps, is the fact that the majority of Welsh language Nonconformists also had few qualms about what was taking place, if the pronouncements made by their spokesmen are to be considered representative of the bulk of the movement. They believed that anglicisation was a process which was inevitable and even in some respects beneficial. Such attitudes were not peculiar to Swansea but may have been stronger in the area because of its mixed cultural heritage. The Baptists had always been in

the vanguard of providing for the needs of English speakers in Wales. The original Baptist church at Ilston had been an English language cause, although with cymricised branches. In the nineteenth century the denomination remained true to its roots by maintaining a positive attitude towards the use of English even though it derived much of its support in the area from Welsh speaking congregations. Thus, Rev Joseph Harris (Gomer) was dispatched to Bristol to learn to preach in English soon after his arrival in Swansea as minister of Back Lane Baptist church in 1801.[136] Such attitudes were apparently still prevalent amongst the Baptist congregations away from the town centre. Thus, in 1847, the deacons of the young Seion Baptist church in Morriston were anxious to obtain the services of a bilingual minister.[137] Likewise John Jones (Mathetes) minister of Caersalem Newydd (1848-54) had much respect for the need for English[138]. The Swansea Baptists reflected the general attitude of their denomination who were 'easily the most anglicised and anglicising denomination amongst Welsh Nonconformists in the nineteenth century'.[139]

Similar attitudes, however, were common among the local Independents, who possessed in Thomas Rees, minister of Ebenezer, Swansea (1862-85), someone who had 'almost a pathological urge'[140] to build English chapels, aided by his wealthy and influential English friends who included Samuel Morley and H.O.Wills. It was not that Rees was antagonistic to the use of

Welsh, but rather that its inevitable disappearance should not be allowed to threaten the future of Wales as a Christian country,. To Rees and many of his Nonconformist contemporaries, Christianity came before Welsh culture.[141] Not everyone agreed with these views, however. One member of the Ebenezer congregation bitterly attacked the English immigrants for the damage being done to the religious tradition in Wales, or at least Swansea, at the close of the nineteenth century. The flood of English into Wales was leading to a sad decline in standards of religious observance:

> Llwydda y Saeson i'n hudo i'w hefelychu hwy yn anwybyddiad hawliau y Saboth a'r addoldy.
>
> [The English will succeed to charm us to copy them in ignoring the duties of the Sabbath and the house of worship.][142]

As a denomination, however, it was only the Calvinistic Methodists who had any real misgivings about what was taking place.[143]

Most Nonconformists in the Swansea area believed that the problem could be resolved through improved provision for worship in the English language. A variety of strategies were adopted to achieve this objective. Existing English as well as Welsh language churches sought to establish mission halls. The mission hall established by Ebenezer Independent church in Waunwen in 1843 had probably begun as a Welsh language cause, but by the end of the century it had converted to English. In 1881, Ebenezer formed another English mission in Poppet Hill above the town. Similarly, in 1861, Mount Pleasant English Baptist church had established a mission in the Hafod area.[144]

Another part of the strategy was the conversion of former Welsh language chapels to the use of English. In some cases this was by design, in others it was forced by necessity. In Morriston, Libanus chapel became the home of a new English cause following the relocation of the original Welsh congregation at their new chapel at Tabernacle.[145] Similarly at Landore, the construction of New Siloh led to the establishment of an English language cause in the original chapel. This began as an English language Sunday School which was organised by the Welsh church from its new base at New Siloh. Subsequently, the Sunday School developed to become a fully-fledged church from 1884. For some years, Rev Robert Thomas, minister of New Siloh also continued to perform similar duties at the new English language church, which became known as Old Siloh.[146]

In other areas, the conversion of Welsh to English language causes was brought about by necessity. Thus, at Danygraig, what began in 1861 as a Welsh language daughter church of nearby Canaan became an English cause in 1883 as a result of the increasing anglicisation of the locality.[147] It was not long before Canaan itself began facing similar difficulties, although it continued to survive as a Welsh language cause until the early years of the twentieth century [148].

Finally, the later decades of the century saw an increasing number of English language churches being founded. The distribution of

these churches reflected the developing linguistic situation in Swansea, as well as the pattern of urban development. Many were founded in the growing residential districts to the west of the town centre, but others also appeared in the industrial communities in and around the valley. A particularly successful cause was the Carmarthen Road Congregational Church. This dated from 1875, and was one of a number of English causes founded by Thomas Rees of Ebenezer. It began as a Sunday School meeting in Zoar Independent Church, after which it transferred to a new chapel in 1876.[149] Continued growth necessitated the rebuilding of the chapel before the end of the century. One of the factors which contributed to the success of this new church was the transfer of a number of members from the Welsh church at Ebenezer. This, of course, was a common practice. To ensure the success of the new English daughter church at Bethel, Manselton, a number of members were transferred from Babell Welsh Calvinistic Methodist church in 1887-8.[150] The Welsh language chapels therefore did much to aid the development of English language Nonconformity in the Swansea area during the later decades of the century. Table IX, page 88, shows the numbers of Welsh and English language churches founded in Swansea during the years 1852-1905.[151]

Table IX : Welsh and English language churches founded in Swansea 1852 - 1907

English churches	44
Welsh churches	19

A proportion of those who came into the area from England had previously attended chapels in their places of birth which belonged to the same denominations as those which they found in Swansea. Others belonged to denominations which had not hitherto existed in Swansea, thus increasing the diversity of Nonconformity in the Swansea area. The strong links between Swansea and the south-west of England were responsible for the introduction of the Bible Christians into the district. This movement had originated in the early years of the century in north Devon, and was the result of a secession from the Wesleyan Methodist denomination led by a local preacher named William O'Brien. The first Bible Christian Church in Swansea was founded in Oxford Street in 1850, where it became known as the 'Devonshire Chapel'. For some years growth was limited, but in 1874 a daughter cause was established in the Hafod district. In addition, on the opposite side of the valley at St Thomas, a Bible Christian cause known as Mount Tabor was set up in an old Methodist mission church.[152] The Primitive Methodists had established their first cause at Tower Lane, High Street, in 1838, but they did not experience any appreciable growth until some time later. This began in 1859 when a Primitive

Methodist church was formed at Clydach Road, Morriston. In the following year, another church was formed at Pell Street, in central Swansea, but this presumably replaced the earlier cause at Tower Lane. In 1886, a Primitive Methodist church known as Ebenezer was established in Plasmarl.[153]

However, many of those who were flooding into Swansea and the other industrial districts of South Wales could not be regarded as even occasional attenders at any place of worship. One writer states that the incomers were 'on the whole rough gold seeking adventurers.....lacking even the most rudimentary elements of religion and of morality'.[154]

This was a situation which demanded new initiatives to supplement existing procedures. Perhaps the most unusual was the Salvation Army, which came to Wales in 1879. It was not until that year that The Cambrian discovered to its surprise that 'a body' called the Salvation Army actually existed, when it carried a report that a member of the movement had been accused of obstructing the public highway in Manchester.[155] Rather unexpectedly, the first Salvation Army cause in Swansea was formed in Morriston, that 'mecca of Welsh Nonconformity', in 1889,[156] following which a branch was set up in nearby Plasmarl.[157] In central Swansea, a Salvation Army Citadel was not opened until 1900.[158]

However, arguably the most significant of these new evangelical initiatives was that of the Forward Movement of the Calvinistic Methodist Church. This was founded in Cardiff in 1891 by the Rev John Pugh, already by that date an evangelist of some note in the South Wales valleys. Pugh realised that the kind of Christianity as represented by the main denominations had little appeal for many. At a time when these denominations were building bigger and more impressive chapels, Pugh deliberately opted for much simpler structures. His places of worship were to be 'large and bright halls,....not the ordinary ecclesiastical buildings called chapels or churches'.[159] Pugh also rejected the system of pew rents which was still common at that time, claiming that it brought into places of worship the social inequalities which existed outside. Indeed, Pugh's halls had ordinary chairs instead of pews. The Forward Movement under Pugh's able leadership, with cash from wealthy sympathisers such as the Cory brothers of Cardiff and Edward Davies, Llandinam, and the support of the Calvinistic Methodist General Assembly, had a considerable impact in those areas where it launched its campaigns.

In Swansea, the new movement found much scope for its activities. Missions were established at a number of sites within the borough, including the industrial districts. The first of these was founded in Port Tennant, an area described by a contemporary as 'one of the blackest spots under the sun'.[160] There, the Forward Movement began in 'an old Welsh Church, quarrelsome and

ineffective', known as Hebron. The new cause under the leadership of Frank Jackson prospered and in 1896 it transferred to a new iron building in the Port Tennant Road. This mission also served as a base from which evangelical activities were launched in the Burrows area of Swansea's dockland. In 1897 Phillip Williams, then acting as a temporary pastor at Port Tennant began holding what developed into regular Sunday School meetings as well as other services in this 'dark and much neglected spot'.

A few years later, a mission was also established in Morriston, where the provision of English language services was limited in comparison with that available in Welsh. This began in 1903 when the Movement succeeded in purchasing a former theatre building in the main street for the sum of £1,800. The cause survived a period of difficulty to become part of the religious landscape of the district for many years.

Elsewhere, the Movement became established in Cwmbwrla in 1907, when it took over the Gorse Mission which had been formed by Babell Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church at the height of the revival in 1904.[161] This mission provided the increasing numbers of English speakers in the area with a useful facility for worship. By that time, too, the Forward Movement had established itself in central Swansea when it took over the King's Hall, which was renamed the Central Hall, under its pastor the redoubtable Seth Joshua.[162]

Unfortunately, by 1907 the Movement was £86,000 in debt and the parent body was becoming fearful about incurring further losses. In that year John Pugh, who had always waived aside such considerations, died. As a result, proposals for additional missions at Plasmarl, Llansamlet and Wassail Square in central Swansea were shelved, so that the provision made by the movement was somewhat patchy.[163] These inadequacies were to some extent remedied by the existence of a small number of humble, unglamorous and obscure mission halls as the century drew to a close.

THE WELSH CHURCH COMMISSION 1906-10

This outline of the growth of Nonconformity in Swansea can be concluded by examining its situation in the early years of the twentieth century. It is especially fortunate that religion in Wales at that time was the subject of a major investigation by a Royal Commission, which has provided historians with a substantial body of statistical and other information about this key aspect of Welsh life. In addition, the materials relating to Swansea which were included in the Report are particularly rich.

There is, of course, a debit side. The Commission originated as a result of the bitter religious divisions then present in Wales, and the conduct of its members, who were drawn from different religious backgrounds, reflected this situation. The inquiry into an admittedly complex subject suffered in consequence from

frequent disagreements which led to the resignations of a number of the original members of the Commission. There was much controversy regarding the meanings of the terms which were used. The term 'adherents', those individuals who attended services, but who were not members of Nonconformist churches was a particularly fruitful source of disagreement.[164] Controversy also surrounded the statistical material which the Commission compiled. Unlike the 1851 Religious Census, the Commission also tried to list the membership figures of individual churches, along with those of the adherents. The accuracy of the figures produced was subjected to intense criticism. Moreover, these statistics referred to the year 1905-6, when conditions were far from usual. It is with these provisos that the materials provided by the Commission can be approached.

A tempting strategy is to use the Report of 1906-10 and the Religious Census of 1851 to compare the situation which existed in Swansea at the start of the twentieth century with that of some fifty years previously. There are, however a number of difficulties which impede this approach. The massive population increase taking place in Swansea after 1851 is, perhaps, the easiest problem to overcome. More difficult a problem is that which arises from the difference in the size of the municipal borough of 1851 compared with that of the county borough at the start of the twentieth century. Again, the 1851 Census was based upon the parishes and their sub-divisions, unlike the Royal

Commission. The area covered by the Swansea parishes and their sub-divisions was not identical with that covered by the county borough at the time of the Royal Commission, although they were within the Swansea area parishes at the time of the Religious Census. These factors must be taken into consideration in any attempt to estimate the progress made from the mid-nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century.

The first stage in this process involves ascertaining from the Commission Report the number of Nonconformist places of worship and the accommodation which they provided. These figures can then be used to discover the extent to which Swansea's Nonconformists made provision for the religious needs of the local population. Apart from a tiny handful, the total number of places of worship listed appears to be correct; the accuracy of the accommodation figures is, however, more doubtful, again for reasons similar to those in 1851. The statistics are shown in Table X, page 96. These were placed before the Commission by Richard Martin, the well known public figure who appeared as a representative of local Nonconformist churches.

Table X : Nonconformist places of worship and their accommodation in Swansea in 1905-6.[165]

Population (1901) : 94,537

Places of worship	Accommodation	Accommodation rate	Schoolrooms
114	62,216	65.8	22,474

Thus, the Nonconformists alone provided accommodation for 65.8 per cent of the population of the borough of Swansea at the start of the twentieth century. This was an appreciable improvement on the situation in 1851 when, it will be recalled, the corresponding figure was 47 per cent. This improvement, moreover, had been achieved despite the enormous population increase which had been taking place. In addition, Richard Martin contrived to prove that the movement catered for virtually the entire population by basing his figures on that part of the population aged five years and over. Table XI contains the figures presented by Martin.[166]

Table XI : Nonconformist accommodation in Swansea Borough, 1905-6

Total population aged 5 years +	83,634
Total Nonconformist accommodation (chapels/mission/schoolrooms)	84,440

This was based on the population in 1901, whereas by 1905 the population was estimated to have increased to 102,780.

The Commission Report also contains figures on the individual denominations within the movement. This information is shown in Table XII[167].

Finally, the material gathered by the Commission provides information about Nonconformist church membership amongst those who were bilingual and those who were monoglot English speakers within the locality. Table XIII, page 98, provides the figures for both categories.[168]

TABLE XII Nonconformist denominations in Swansea 1905-1906 Numbers of places of worship, accommodation and membership

Denomination	Chapels etc	Sitting	Membership	Adherents
Independents	33	20,000	8,287	5,675
Baptists	24	15,374	5,843	5,816
C.Methodists	28	13,392	3,716	3,278
Wesleyans	8	3,550	724	1,632
Prim,Methodists	3	876	209	460
Bible Christians	3	750	330	520
Unitarians	1	314	-	150
Friends	1	250	50	100
Presbyterians	1	1,250	337	200
Others	12	5,860	1,115	2,620
Total	114	62,216	20,671	20,311

TABLE XIII Nonconformist church membership and linguistic background in Swansea 1906

Population in 1901 : 94,537
Population aged three years and more: 87,885

Linguistic group	Population	Noncon Church members	%
Bilinguals	28,428	11,6646	40.9
English monoglots	58,777	9,025	18.3

It must be emphasised that membership of the Nonconformist churches was not synonymous with chapel going, since it excluded the large numbers of non-members or adherents. Moreover, the members formed a higher proportion of the congregations in the Welsh language churches than their English language counterparts. On the other hand, it is impossible to determine how many of the members of English language churches in the area were, in fact, Welsh speaking, although such individuals certainly existed. However, even when these factors are taken into consideration, the figures suggest that the proportion of monoglot English speakers who attended the chapels was considerably lower than those who were bilingual.

Throughout the nineteenth century, contemporaries had remarked upon the loyalty shown by the Welsh to their chapels. A local witness who, when questioned by the Welsh Church Commission about the relationship between language and religion, put it thus:

"The Nonconformists love the Welsh"

"And they love the Welsh Services?"

'Yes'.[169]

Given that in the Swansea area, the numbers of English speakers far exceeded Welsh speakers by 1900, the future for Nonconformity appeared far from secure.

This chapter has presented Nonconformity in Swansea as a series of institutions and causes which experienced a flourishing, if frequently turbulent existence during the course of the nineteenth century. The driving force behind this movement was religion. It is therefore necessary to turn to religion as the subject of the next chapter.

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CHAPTER 3

NONCONFORMITY AS A RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

Whilst the previous chapter traced the development of Nonconformity in the Swansea area, this will examine its characteristics as a religious phenomenon, and consider what they contributed to its growth. The movement in Swansea is particularly worthy of study because of its diversity, which provides opportunities for obtaining greater insights than might be the case elsewhere.

From the late eighteenth century, Nonconformity in Swansea was an expanding movement. However, this general trend was uneven within the movement as a whole. Thus, the Quakers, present in the area since the middle of the seventeenth century, were almost invisible during this great era of growth. The Unitarian church in the town's High Street flourished, yet it remained the only representative of the denomination in the immediate locality. The General Baptists appeared in the early years of the nineteenth century, only to fade into oblivion long before its end. In contrast, the Independents, Baptists and the various types of Methodists experienced phenomenal growth. Indeed, in the Swansea area these movements were for much of the nineteenth century almost synonomous with Nonconformity. Incidentally, the differing growth rates of the various denominations within the movement suggest that its growth was not simply a result of the failings of

the Established Church as is sometimes argued. Instead, Nonconformity possessed to varying degrees certain religious attractions which did not exist elsewhere.

Part of the answer for the differing growth rates of the various denominations may be found in the approaches which they adopted to the fundamentals of doctrine and religious practice. Here, a key influence was the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century. This challenged the cool cerebral Christianity which was widespread during the time and injected into it a religion which appealed to feelings rather than intellect. As directed by the new religious enthusiasts, the old, leisurely, intellectual sermons were replaced by those which insisted on the need for personal salvation.[1] The new mood was reinforced by the use of hymns which appealed to a whole range of emotions. In this changing religious atmosphere, emotional displays were not only tolerated, but positively welcomed as indications of religious zeal.

Linked with the question of religious practice was that of doctrine. The new enthusiasm found much support amongst those who were orthodox in their views. In Wales, this meant Calvinism, which had never excluded an evangelical approach despite the apparent contradictions thus implied.[2] Calvinism was supplemented in time by Wesleyan Arminianism, whose evangelical character was explicit. Conversely, the opponents of the new

enthusiasm were those who sympathised with such "dangerous" ideas as Arminianism and Unitarianism.

The importance of doctrine and practice relative to each other is difficult to determine, but each probably appealed to differing sections of society. At the end of the eighteenth century, and for long afterwards, matters of doctrine aroused much attention at least among the more literate Nonconformists. Perhaps for many others, doctrine was only important because of its association with a particular type of religious practice. Taken together, therefore, both these facets of religion were of considerable importance in their influence upon the growth rates of the various Nonconformist denominations. The most successful denominations were those which combined the new enthusiasm with doctrinal orthodoxy. The others, who rejected enthusiasm but who embraced unorthodox doctrines were relegated to the fringes of the movement.

The new tendencies were most common at first among the Methodists, who began as part of the Anglican Church and not of Dissent. Whether religious enthusiasm originated solely with the Methodists is an extremely vexed question, which it is to be hoped, does not have to be answered within the confines of this study. What is important and indisputable is that this Methodist enthusiasm also emerged among certain of the Dissenting denominations as the eighteenth century advanced. It was adopted most easily amongst

the Independents, whose Calvinist theology perhaps helped make them more receptive to the new approaches.

The close co-operation between the Methodists and Independents in the Morriston district towards the end of the eighteenth century has already been remarked upon.[3] It is true that Lewis Rees of Mynyddbach was never a staunch supporter of the new enthusiasm, probably because he was too set in his ways, as well as being apprehensive about the challenge which the Methodists presented to his own denomination. In short, he was first and foremost an Independent.[4] His younger contemporaries within the denomination did not have his inhibitions; William Edwards who was brought to the area to assist in the planning of Morriston has been described as being primarily a Methodist although he was, in fact, an Independent minister.[5] Likewise, John Davies, the son-in-law of Lewis Rees, did much to help the local Methodists even though he, too, was an Independent minister and an active figure within his denomination.[6] Rees' successor at Mynyddbach before his transfer to the new Ebenezer Independent church in Swansea was David Davies. The historian Thomas Rees describes Davies as being one of the new wave of preachers who rejected the traditional approach based on intellectual discussion and argument, and replaced it with the fervour of the new enthusiasts. Davies became one of the most effective and popular preachers of his day and his style was copied by many others:

> Rhoddodd ei ysbryd bywiog, a'i ddull tanllyd a bregethu dôn newydd i'r weinidogaeth yn mysg yr Annibynwyr.[7]
>
> [His lively spirit and his fiery style of preaching gave a new tone to the ministry amongst the Independents.]

Davies, more than anyone else perhaps, personified the new tendencies which were sweeping through his and other Nonconformist denominations during the early nineteenth century.

> Ynddo ef yn anad neb o'i gyfoeswyr y sylweddolir yn llawn ddylanwad y Diwygiad Methodistaidd ar yr Annibynwyr.[8]
>
> [It is in him, more than many of his contemporaries was fully realised the influence of the Methodist Revival on the Independents.]

His views can best be summed up by a statement attributed to him in the Ebenezer church history.

> There is no true religion where there is no heart religion.[9]

The response of the local Presbyterians whose church had existed in Swansea's High Street since the close of the seventeenth century was very different. In Wales, the Presbyterians did not exist as a separate movement but were linked with the Independents.[10] They were, however, more lukewarm in their Calvinism, and this made them receptive to unorthodox doctrines. The situation amongst the Swansea congregation had long illustrated this general trend. In addition, the minister of the church from 1751 till his death in 1785 was Solomon Harris, whose orthodoxy was, at the very least, questionable in view of his early experiences, including his training at Carmarthen Academy

during the years when it enjoyed a certain notoriety because of its sympathy for unorthodox doctrines.[11] Harris' successor at Swansea, William Howell, was more orthodox but by then it was too late to halt the drift to Unitarianism which had already commenced. Thus, in 1811, a visiting minister wrote:

> I had the pleasure of conversing with several respectable people belonging to this congregation who are truly in earnest respecting the promotion of Unitarianism[12]

His words were borne out in 1814, when the congregation forced the removal of the now ageing William Howell from his pastorate, as a result of which he and a group of his supporters formed a new Independent cause nearby in Castle Street.[13] The remainder of the 'Presbyterian' congregation then proceeded to invite Richard Awbery to become their new minister. Awbery, a man with strong local connections, was a pronounced Unitarian. He had attended Hoxton Academy, London, where his tutors had included the Arian Dr Abraham Rees, son of Lewis Rees of Mynyddbach. He had then served as a librarian at Dr Williams' Library in London from 1782-6 before taking up pastorates at various Unitarian churches in England. With Awbery's appointment, the Swansea church signalled its adoption of Unitarian ideas.[14] At the same time, the church was turning against the new enthusiastic approach which was gaining ground elsewhere. The Swansea Unitarians thus retained those characteristics familiar amongst the eighteenth century Dissenters. Their ministers were to be, on the whole, men of learning, but who lacked the ability to appeal to the mass of

population. One such was Edward Higginson, minister from 1858 to 1876. One of his successors states that Higginson's sermons were 'most finished productions and his fine literary and artistic taste rendered them the very bread of life to those who were able to appreciate them'[15]

The situation amongst the Baptists of the district was far less clear cut and reflected the difficulties faced by the movement as a whole towards the close of the eighteenth century and for a number of years subsequently. The new spirit of enthusiasm became noticeable among the Baptists from about 1770, with an increase in the number of baptisms as a result.[16] However, not everyone welcomed what was taking place. Many wished to preserve the old formal, even sedate approach to which they had been accustomed. This appears to be true of the congregation of the 'Engine' Church which espoused Baptist principles sufficient for it to be admitted into membership of the Particular Baptist Association in 1787.[17] David Jones, who became a Baptist minister in Swansea shortly afterwards, stated that the meetings of the Engine congregation were free of the emotionalism which could be witnessed elsewhere. Indeed, he likened these meetings to 'debating societies', which were 'never turbulent but in the highest degree decorous and edifying.[18] The members of this cause were 'a people determined to call no man on earth master in religion, but resolved to search the Bible for themselves, and to study its contents with minds unshackled by human creeds or formalities'.[19]

It was inevitable that such a group was going to adopt a variety of practices and doctrines:

> Their first leaders were Independents, but they soon became Baptists which they still continue to be: they afterwards exchanged Trinitarianism for Sabellianism, and Calvinism for Arminianism and at one time they strongly inclined to Sandemanianism.[20]

The 'Sandemanianism' to which reference was made in the above extract was a set of ideas developed earlier in the eighteenth century by a Scottish cleric named John Glass and his son-in-law Robert Sandeman, and which was later propagated amongst the Baptists by Archibald Maclean. A fundamental principle of Sandemanianism was that the case for Christianity should be presented in intellectual terms only, thus excluding any element of feeling whatsoever.[21] This was an approach which discouraged zeal and conviction, as well as evangelical activity. It ran counter to the new enthusiasm; indeed John Wesley was condemned as one of the most dangerous men that had ever appeared in the Church.[22]

In Wales, the movement attracted most support in the north, where its most celebrated disciple was John Richard Jones, of Ramoth, Merioneth, leader of a group of churches which broke away from the main Baptist Association in 1798. In Swansea Sandemanianism was associated with the name of Popkin. Evidence is scanty and confusing, but it appears that John Popkin of Trelech, Carmarthenshire, was a former Methodist who turned to Sandemanianism after a disagreement with his associates. He then

formed a number of Sandemanian churches, including one at an unidentified location in Swansea.[23] In addition, he was the author of a series of pamphlets which appeared after 1764. Certainly, he was regarded as a serious threat by his former Methodist friends, especially William Williams and Daniel Rowlands. More confusion is caused by the fact that Popkin's son was also named John, and he, too, was an active supporter of Sandemanianism whilst living in the Swansea area, where he died in 1832 aged 88 years.[24]

Sandemanian practices were apparently introduced into the Engine Church by 'Mr W Powell', a member of the congregation.[25] These included weekly communion services, feet washing and the kiss of fellowship ['cusan sanctaidd'] all of which were held to be based on Biblical precepts. As late as 1796, Christmas Evans, during his 'Sandemanian period' was corresponding with the Engine Church, which by that time had long ceased to belong to the Welsh Baptist Association.[26]

It would, indeed be enlightening to discover the identity and background of the members of the Engine Church, who displayed such sophisticated knowledge of doctrine and practice in this relatively obscure locality. However, the events taking place in the Swansea Baptist Church which met at the Old Meeting House [Yr Hen Dŷ Cwrdd], situated in Baptist Court off the town's High Street were probably more significant for the development of the

local Baptist movement. Joshua Thomas, the eighteenth-century Baptist historian, states in his Hanes which was almost contemporary with the events, that rumblings of discontent among the members of the Swansea Baptist Church were first heard during the pastorate of T Phillips (1779-83) who was, incidentally, the first outsider to become pastor at the church. Thomas does not go into great detail as to the causes other than to state that Phillips was considered to be unsuitable by at least some members of the congregation.

> Nad oedd Mr Phillips yn debyg o fod yn defnyddiol a chysurus.[27]
>
> [Mr Phillips was not likely to be useful and comfortable.]

This situation continued and indeed deteriorated under Benjamin Morgan (1784-91) who succeeded Phillips as pastor.[28] David Jones, writing some years later, states that Morgan's style was not sufficiently 'enthusiastic' to satisfy those members of the church who had become imbued with the new religious fervour ['y tân dieithr'] which appears to have appealed to the younger worshippers ['`Y Bobl Ifanc'] in particular:

> Nad oedd ei ddoniau mor fywiog a gwresog ag y dymunai rhai o'i eglwys.[29]
>
> [His talents were not as lively and warm as some of the church would have wished.]

The result of these disagreements was that in September 1785, some 45 members of the Swansea church left and formed a separate Baptist cause at nearby Back Lane [Heol Gefn]. This new cause was received into membership of the Particular Baptist Association in 1788 after a number of unsuccessful attempts had been made by visiting ministers to heal the breach between the breakaway church and its parent.[30]

These events marked not the end but the start of difficulties in which the local Baptists were to be embroiled for a number of years. John Williams, new pastor at the Old Meeting House since 1791, was attacked by members of the Baptist Association of South Wales for his alleged unorthodox views.[31] In 1797 Williams was expelled from the Association and forced to give up his pastorate at the church which had inevitably suffered as a result of these disagreements. Controversy also existed at the recently formed Back Lane church, where the views of the pastor, Rev Daniel Jones, were not sufficiently orthodox to satisfy some of the members of the congregation.[32]

The troubles at Swansea were part of a series which disturbed the Baptists in many parts of Wales. Opponents of the new enthusiasm like William Richards bitterly criticised the new preaching methods which disgraced the Bible:

> Ysgrechian, crugleisio, bloeddio a bytheirio geiriau uwchben y pobl.[33]

['Screeching, howling, bawling, cursing, making threatening words above the people.]

Such devices had a damaging effect, causing people to behave in an undignified manner, even jumping to their feet during services ['neidio yn yr addoliad'].[34]

The climax of these events came in 1799, when following a meeting of the South West Wales Baptist Association, a number of churches separated to form a new General Baptist Association of Welsh churches.[35] Whilst some later rejoined the main Baptist Association, the secession became permanent in the case of the two Swansea churches which met at the Engine and the Old Meeting House, both of which became closely aligned with Unitarian ideas. In 1811, a minister who visited the Old Meeting House stated:

> I preached in the Unitarian Baptist church..... This congregation is but small.[37]

However, the situation of both congregations was precarious. The 'Engine' did not long survive the break, and appears to have disintegrated about ten years later.[38] The Swansea Baptist Church, meeting in the Old Meeting House at Baptist Court, continued to survive until shortly after the middle of the century when it, too collapsed, a relic of past controversies.[39]

An interesting postscript to the history of this church appears in Seren Gomer in 1859.[40] This contained a report of the Quarterly Meeting of the Glamorgan Baptist Association in which it was resolved to take measures to obtain possession of the former

Baptist Chapel in Baptist Court in order to form an English Baptist Church based upon the practices of the Association.

> Er dechreu casglu iddo eglwys seisneg o Fedyddwyr o'r un farn a threfn a'r gymmanfa hon.
>
> [In order to begin to collect to it an English church of Baptists of the same opinion and order as this association.]

A year later, it was stated that a Dr Davies of Cardigan had taken over the 'old chapel ['yr Hen gapel'] for a year, on the understanding that he would establish a closed-communion English Baptist Church.[41] Further references appear to be missing, so presumably the venture was not the success its proposers had hoped for.

The disputes at Back Lane Baptist Church were followed by different consequences. Daniel Jones, whose ability counted for little in the light of his dubious views, left the church in 1799, taking with him a body of his supporters. He subsequently moved to Trowbridge, where he established a General Baptist Church.[42]

Subsequently, the remaining members of the Back Lane congregation secured the services of a new pastor in 1801 whose doctrinal views proved eminently acceptable. This was Joseph Harris, 'Gomer', who was to prove a doughty defender of Calvinism during these difficult years. Indeed, not only did Harris uphold the cause of orthodoxy within his own denomination but also against those in other denominations who held contrary views. In 1804, he

published his Bwyall Crist yng nghoed Anghrist,[43] which was a reply to a pamphlet written by Josiah Rees, the Unitarian minister of Gellionen.[44] Some years later, he became involved in similar disputes with Richard Awbery of the Swansea Unitarian Church. This began when Harris published a work entitled Traethawd ar Briodol Dduwdod ein Harglwydd Iesu.[45] [Treatise on the proper deity of our Lord Jesus Christ]. This brought a reply from Awbery entitled An examination of the Reverend Joseph Harris's Treatise on the Proper Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.[46] Awbery was a scholarly and intelligent man, and perhaps wisely, Harris saw fit not to reply, but contented himself with a few derogatory remarks about his opponent.

The early decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the arrival of a cymricised version of that Wesleyan Methodism whose influence had previously been restricted to English speakers only. The new movement shared with the other major Nonconformist denominations an aggressive evangelicism but unlike them it rejected Calvinism for Arminianism. This partnership of evangelicism and Arminianism greatly added to the appeal of the denomination. J R Jones of Ramoth was doubtless reflecting the fears of many when he claimed that Wesleyan Methodism would make greater progress than any other denomination in Wales.[47]

However the threat thus posed never materialised. In Swansea, the movement was of miniscule proportions, despite the promising start

which it made in 1812 with the foundation of Tabernacle Church in Tontine Street in the upper part of the town.[48] Elsewhere it was represented in Morriston by a group which met in what appears to have been rather makeshift premises. At the time of the Religious Census in 1851, this congregation consisted of an average of 19 worshippers.[49] Another pointer to the lack of progress made by the movement was its failure to establish a cause in Dinas Noddfa chapel, Landore, following the temporary demise of its original Baptist cause.[50]

It is likely that the relative failure of the Welsh Wesleyans was due, in part, to their late arrival in an area where others had been active for some time previously. The immediate response of these other denominations to the new threat was to redefine their Calvinism in a more extreme form. This, however, proved to be only temporary and was replaced by a more moderate form of the doctrine which was better able to rebut the criticisms made by the Wesleyans. Indeed, this new Calvinism [y system newydd] was not dissimilar from Wesleyan Arminianism in certain respects. The process of doctrinal change can be illustrated by the case of Daniel Evans, Minister of Mynyddbach Independent Church (1808-35). As a young man, Evans had been imbued with High Calvinism 'oherwydd felly yr ydoedd wedi cael ei hyfforddi.' [Because that was how he had been trained.][51] Subsequently he moderated his views in line with the new thinking.

As the century advanced, the major denominations gradually arrived at something approaching a consensus over fundamental points of doctrine, so that in this respect there was little to choose between them. In 1840, the members of Caersalem Newydd, formed when a section left the nearby Mynyddbach Independent Church were quite prepared to transfer to the Baptist denomination, although it has to be admitted that the circumstances were somewhat exceptional.[52] Many years later, William Williams, a local Calvinistic Methodist minister, stated that the differences between his denomination and the Independents were 'slender', adding that they 'preach the same doctrines and in the same spirit'.[53] The general consensus, too, means that the doctrinal conflicts so characteristic of the earlier years of the century began to subside. Indeed, doctrinal matters as a whole tended to diminish in importance with the passage of time.

This trend was remarked upon by a number of witnesses who appeared before the Welsh Church Commission at the start of the twentieth century. One local witness, David Lloyd, secretary of Ebenezer Independent Church, Swansea, stated that the members of his church were not expected to make any public statement of their belief, adding that at present, 'there is no mention of the doctrine' [of Calvinism][54] Yet the deeds of Ebenezer, issued in 1844 and again in 1862, contained a very strong declaration in favour of Calvinist principles.[55] Whatever sources of discord existed among the mainstream denominations at the end of the nineteenth

century, it would appear that doctrine was not one of them. As one scholar has put it,

> The rôle of ideology and denominational differences in Welsh religious life have been exaggerated at the expense of the fundamental community that existed.[56]

Doctrine thus became a less contentious issue as the century progressed. At the same time, the enthusiasm which had accompanied the movement in its early days from the late eighteenth century onwards, also began to diminish. In part, this was because even those denominations which had espoused this approach now began to entertain doubts about its suitability. Ministers, increasingly concerned to cultivate more respectable images for themselves and for the movement as a whole, now began to expect greater formality in chapel services. Along with uncouth behaviour, public displays of religious emotionalism were frowned upon. The influx of English Nonconformists, often with middle class backgrounds, was welcomed as a means of introducing a degree of decorum and of dignity in the services.[57] Of course, the atmosphere in the chapels belonging to the mainstream denominations was different from that to be found in others. However, there was an increasing tendency for the fervour to be disciplined, and for it to be directed along certain clearly defined channels.

As the century reached its final quarter, it is likely that the established denominations in Swansea appealed mainly to those who were habitual worshippers, or who at least belonged to the chapel tradition. The local population, however, also included a large number of people who did not belong to either of these categories. This situation gave rise to a number of new initiatives such as the foundation of the Forward Movement of the Calvinistic Methodist Church and the Salvation Army, along with locally based efforts often consisting of single mission halls.[58] Such movements, with their greater informality and liveliness perhaps faithfully reflected the spirit of earlier Nonconformity which had been tempered with the passage of time. Curiously, all these schemes were part of English language Nonconformity. It would appear from the history of the movement as a whole in the Swansea area that Nonconformity was at its most successful when it was prepared to adopt a strong evangelical character.

Any examination of the growth of Nonconformity must include the character and role of the ministers. The first point to note is the origin of those who served in this capacity in the locality. It was to be expected that the churches in the expanding communities of the Swansea area would attract as ministers men from elsewhere. Even so, the numbers involved are still surprising, given the long tradition of local Dissent. The majority of the more prominent ministers in the bigger chapels came from elsewhere, especially from the rural districts. This

was true of all the denominations in the area. Of the Independents, David Davies, minister of Ebenezer Church in central Swansea, from its foundation till his death in 1816, was a native of Llangeler, on the border of Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire.[59] His successor, Thomas Davies (1818-42) came from Denbigh.[60] Their Baptist contemporaries, Joseph Harris (1801-25) and Daniel Davies (1826-55) were also outsiders, originating respectively from Llangloffan in Pembrokeshire,[61] and the Llandovery district of north Carmarthenshire.[62] David Howell, who held the pastorate at Trinity Calvinistic Methodist church in Swansea during more than one period during the first half of the nineteenth century, hailed from St Clears.[63] Similarly, Dr David Saunders who then took over the pulpit at Trinity was from Newcastle Emlyn.[64] That many ministers were not natives of the Swansea area was also to a large extent true of their congregations during much of the century. Indeed, it may well be that this was a factor which helped determine the choice of chapel for many of the newcomers.

The financial remuneration received by ministers tended to vary. Those who served the bigger and wealthier congregations benefited accordingly. Thus in 1841 Thomas Davies of Ebenezer Independent Church could consider himself reasonably fortunate to receive a monthly income which varied from £6.0.0.9d to £7.14.8d.[65] Those in churches with small congregations, or in poorer districts inevitably found that these circumstances were reflected in their

wages. The well known Baptist minister John Jones ('Mathetes') received only fifteen shillings per week as payment whilst serving at Caersalem Newydd during the years 1848 to 1854.[66] However, he was more fortunate than Benjamin Watkins, who received no more than £3 per month for acting as pastor of the two Baptist churches of Dinas Noddfa, Landore and Seion,[67] Morriston during the same period. In such circumstances, ministers were doubtless pleased to supplement their meagre wages by delivering lectures, or to receive the occasional gift from a grateful congregation. Even so, the wages of the lowest paid ministers in Swansea compared more than favourably with those in other parts of Wales. Daniel Evans, who came to Mynyddbach in 1808 had previously been a minister in Bangor, where his annual income had been no more than £10.[68]

The small payments received by many ministers meant that they were forced to supplement their earnings by taking on other employments. Joseph Harris, as is well known, was a prominent businessman in Swansea, where his interests included Seren Gomer[69]. Evan Griffiths ['Ieuan Ebblig'] was primarily a bookseller and publisher although he, too, was an Independent minister who served from time to time in a number of local chapels, including Siloh, Landore.[70] Apart from book selling and bookbinding, ministers were employed as building contractors, which skills were in particular demand during the age of chapel building. The best known figure in this respect was probably

Thomas Thomas of Siloh, Landore (1853-75), who was responsible for the design and building of a number of local chapels during the middle years of the century.[71]

In the industrial districts, a number of ministers were also employed in local industry. Thomas Davies of Horeb, Morriston, worked for many years in a local copper works,[72] as did William Humphreys of Bethlehem, Cadle[73] (1851-54). John Davies of Mynyddbach (1840-54) was employed in a supervisory capacity in a local colliery and his death in 1854 (6 September) took place when he was overcome by coal gas.[74]

However, it may well be that these forms of employment, although forced by circumstances, helped rather than hindered the growth of Nonconformity by creating a bond between minister and what were mainly working class congregations. The losses incurred in the gradual change from part-time to full time ministers during the course of the nineteenth century were perhaps greater than the gains. This process took place partly because congregations in an increasing number of cases were able to pay higher wages. Nevertheless, as late as 1888, the new Salim English Baptist Church, Landore was unable to offer the new minister, Rev Caleb Joshua, a fixed wage.[75]

The local Nonconformist movement did not produce a John Elias, or Christmas Evans; it did, however, include men of considerable

ability. Thomas Levi, minister of Philadelphia Calvinistic Methodist church Morriston (1860-76) was one of the most prominent figures in his denomination. He was responsible for producing a number of children's magazines, including Trysorfa y Plant, which began in 1862 and was intended for use in Sunday Schools. Profits from this magazine helped finance more learned publications such as Y Drysorfa and Y Traethodydd.[76] Possibly the best known local Nonconformist minister of his time was Thomas Rees of Ebenezer Independent church, Swansea (1862-85).[77] Apart from his writings on Nonconformity, especially its history, Rees was extremely active in promoting his denomination both in Swansea and elsewhere. He was especially assiduous in establishing English language chapels and appropriately the climax of these activities came with his appointment as chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales shortly before his death in 1885. Such individuals ensured that the churches with which they were concerned acquired a prestige which would have had a healthy influence on attendances.

At the same time, there were many others who did not enjoy a wider fame but who earned respect and admiration for their integrity and self-sacrifice. Such a man was Daniel Evans of Mynyddbach (1808-35), of whom it was written,

'Na bu gweinidog erioed yn cael ei barchu yn fwy gan bobl ei ofal na Mr Evans.[78]

[No minister was ever more respected by the people in his care than Mr Evans.]

Then again there was Thomas Davies, who founded Horeb, Morriston, almost single-handed in 1844, and where he continued for the remainder of his life till his death in 1894.[79] In addition, in 1859 he took on the lonely Baran Independent Church, even though this involved a long tramp across bleak and inhospitable hills above Clydach and Pontardawe for which he received one shilling for each service.[80]

There were conversely, those with feet of clay, or who at least failed to measure up to their responsibilities. William Hughes, the first minister of Libanus, Morriston, following its separation from the parent church at Mynyddbach was removed from his position in 1841 because of 'anfoesoldeb ei gymeriad'[81] [immorality of character]. After serving for many years as minister of Ebenezer church, Swansea, Thomas Davies was dismissed for drunkenness in 1842, a victim of the emerging temperance movement.[82] Despite his failings, Davies retained the affection of many people in the district and continued to serve in other Independent churches for some years afterwards. His funeral in 1861 was substantial, and bore clear testimony to his popularity.[83]

Very different was the case of Isaac Harries whose appointment as minister of Mynyddbach in succession to Daniel Evans in 1836 was a disaster of monumental proportions. Two years after he had commenced his duties, the congregation discovered that their new minister had to appear in court to answer charges of criminal misconduct. To add to the scandal, the case cost the church £300 in order to extricate Harries from his difficulties.[84] Understandably, therefore, it was decided that Harries should be removed. However, after this decision had been rescinded, Harries had the temerity to turn up to conduct church services in a drunken condition. To make matters worse, he was also accused of fraudulent conduct.[85]

The result of these events was that the congregation became bitterly divided; many chose to leave altogether so that the membership was reduced from a total of 500 in 1836 to a mere 30 within a few years.[86] Matters subsequently came to a head in September 1839 when Harries' opponents took possession of the chapel and refused entry to the minister and those who still supported him, 'gan ei gloi trwy rym police constables, clubs ac offer tân'[87] [Closing it by means of police constables clubs, and fire-arms.] Harries and those who remained loyal to him consequently abandoned the struggle and instead founded a new cause which opened as Caersalem Newydd in September 1840.[88] Shortly afterwards, however, Harries was forced to leave following further disagreements with his erstwhile supporters. He eventually returned to North Wales where he indulged in more

misconduct for which he was publicly whipped through the streets of Bangor.[89] Meanwhile, the new church which he founded went from strength to strength, but as a Baptist cause. However, the affair did untold damage to Mynyddbach; even perhaps, permanently.

It is possible to argue that the role of the ministers is the key to the success of Nonconformity in the nineteenth century. Through their self-sacrifice, their ability and above all, their constant effort, they awoke in many people an awareness of their spiritual needs, and did much to satisfy these needs. This is a contentious viewpoint, however, which disregards such factors as the weakness of the Established Church along with the nature of contemporary society. Nevertheless, at the very least, the conduct and personality of individual ministers had a marked effect on the development of individual churches, and thus indirectly on the denominations and the movement as a whole. This study of local Nonconformity underlines the view that the rôle of the Nonconformist ministers should not be ignored in explaining the development of the movement.

Another item which requires attention is religious revivalism. Nineteenth century figures such as Henry Richard and Thomas Rees[90] saw the revival as part of the explanation for the success of Welsh Nonconformity. It is not difficult to understand why. The frequency of revivals, especially in the crucial formative period before 1850 kept religion in the forefront of people's lives. Moreover, each revival yielded a rich harvest of

converts which in turn stimulated chapel building. However, it could be argued that the revival was as much a manifestation of religious zeal as it was a cause. Indeed, it is by no means certain that the revival was a purely religious phenomenon, but rather that it was inspired, at least in part, by social conditions. This chapter, however, will consider the revivals in the Swansea area in religious terms only.

Revivals had been taking place particularly in South and West Wales at various times since the emergence of the Methodist movement in the 1730s. The first event of this kind in the Swansea area did not take place until 1793, when there occurred what Rev Hopkin Bevan, the Llangyfelach Methodist, described as 'diwygiad grymus'[91] [powerful revival]. The revivalist atmosphere prevailed for some years and was particularly noticeable in Llansamlet, where the strength of Welsh Methodism would make such events likely. Only slightly more information surrounds the next revival which took place in the district in 1806-7. Thomas Davies, minister of Horeb, Morriston, who was born in 1809, recalled his mother describing the revival as being very powerful ['un nerthol iawn'], with scenes of great fervour taking place.[92] Thomas and Rees, in their history of the Independent churches were sufficiently confident to describe the revival as a 'diwygiad nodedig o rymus' [a very powerful revival], with people spending until midnight in the chapels, singing, crying, and praying ['bobl yn aros yn y capeli hyd hanner nos, ganu, wylo, a gweddio'].[93] One witness of the event was David Davies, the

Independent minister of Mynyddbach and its daughter churches. He felt sufficiently moved to set his thoughts in verse:

> Treforis yn ddiweddar gadd brawf o ffafr Duw
> Trwy ei ymweliad grasol gwnaeth lawer marw yn fyw
> Rhai hen a chanol oedran, ac hefyd ieuenctyd man
> Achubwyd rhai ugeiniau rhag myn'd i uffern dân
> Fe gerddai'r awel rymus i fyny ac i lawr
> A'i thro trwy Abertawy nes briwio muriau mawr;
> Ac hefyd Llangyfelach o amgylch Mynyddbach
> Cawd yn nghwmbwrla berlau fydd byth yn
> berffaith iach'[94]
>
> [Morriston lately had proof of God's fervour
> Through his gracious visit many who were dead were
> brought to life
> Some old and middle aged and also youths
> Some sinners were saved from going to hell-fire
> The powerful breeze walked to and fro
> Its visit through Swansea till the walls were
> shattered
> And also Llangyfelach and around Mynyddbach
> They received in Cwmbwrla pearls that will
> always be perfectly sound]

Somewhat surprisingly, however, the revival did not lead to the flurry of activity which usually resulted from such events. Indeed, for a number of years subsequently, the area did not experience anything similar. Writing in the preface to his diary for the year 1821-2, David Davies provides a less than encouraging picture of the situation in Morriston where

> Y mae lluoedd y ddraig yn gorchfygu pe bydai bossibl yr etholodigion yn enwedig. Tua canol mis Hydref ymddengys fod yr ysgol yn Nhreforus wedi darfod yn llwyr trwy ei penwendid.[95]
>
> [the hosts of the dragon are victorious if it were possible, the elect especially. About the middle of October it appears that the school in Morriston has virtually ceased because of its folly.]

David Davies, like his namesake who had been a prominent Independent minister in the Swansea area, was a native of the Carmarthenshire village of Llangeler. A bookbinder by trade, in

1819 Davies settled in the hamlet of Treboeth, in the parish of Llangyfelach where he took lodgings with Rev Daniel Evans minister of the nearby Mynyddbach church.[96] Not surprisingly, Davies himself became a member of Mynyddbach two years later.[97] Despite leading a very busy life, Davies kept a diary which forms a priceless source of information about popular religion in an important part of the Swansea area during these years.

Notwithstanding Davies's remarks about the situation in Morriston, the local Nonconformist movement was far from dormant; after 1820 activity increased markedly, as was reflected by the foundation of important new causes and the expansion of others already existing.[98]

It was against this background that the revival of 1828 took place. This was to be the most important event of its kind to affect the Swansea area in the whole of the century. It began in north-east Carmarthenshire, probably in Caeo, from where it spread to envelope the whole of the surrounding countryside within a short time.[99] By the autumn of 1828 it reached the industrial districts of West Glamorgan. Its arrival in Swansea was duly noted by David Davies in his diary for Sunday 16 November:

> Dechreu 'r dywgiad yn Nhreforus.[100]
>
> [Start of the revival in Morriston.]

The movement then gathered pace rapidly so that on Sunday 23rd November Davies made the following entry:

> 'Yr holl ardal ar dân o gariad at Dduw'[101]

[The whole district on fire for love of God.]

Davies himself was deeply affected, as the entry for 25th November shows:

> Gweithio a calon gyda Duw trwy'r dydd Gan diolch am fy mod hyd heddiw y tu yma i uffern Dân Haleliwia.[102]
>
> [Working heartily with God throughout the day with thanks that I am today this side of Hell-fire. Hallelujah.]

The ecstatic joy revealed in the above entry is understandable, given the fears, or terrors, which could be stimulated by the type of preaching which took place during the revivals of these years. Writing at the start of the twentieth century, J Vyrnwy Morgan stated that the early nineteenth century revivals produced vivid images of Hell. Preachers talked of 'Large cauldrons full of boiling oil and brimstone', and of 'the doings of horned and cloven footed demons'.[103] Indeed, 'one would imagine they had been there on a tour of inspection, so minute and exact were their delineations'.[104]

During the weeks leading to Christmas 1828, Davies attended packed services. On 30th November he attended 'the most populous meeting I ever seen',[105] adding 'Thanks be to God for this day'. The atmosphere was recreated on the following Thursday (11 December) when he attended 'a glorious meeting. God's presence there'.[106]

This mood continued over the Christmas period, with a reference to a 'heavenly meeting' on Saturday 27 December.[107] And so it went on, with 'heavenly meetings' (a favourite phrase) continuing until

the early summer when the revival, in Davies's experience at least, had run its course.

David Davies presents a view of the revival of 1828 as seen by someone who was an ardent participant. Not everyone, however, shared his opinions. The Cambrian newspaper decided that the revival did not merit any special coverage, a policy which was to be repeated subsequently. The revival did, however, emerge in the correspondence columns of the newspaper when the behaviour of some of the revivalists led to a heated debate. This began when a letter from a correspondent who signed himself 'Orthodox' deplored the behaviour of those present at a revival meeting in Neath.

> On Sunday last,.... we had an assemblage of 'jumpers' at their meeting house in this town..... It was a dreadful spectacle to behold such numbers of both sexes, young and old, seemingly so bereft of reason as thus to expose themselves.....to the laughter of the unfeeling, to the pity of the compassionate, and the contempt of the generality.(108)

'Orthodox' was not alone in his views. The following edition of the newspaper contained a lengthy letter from 'Philemon' who referred to the great excitement in some of the congregations assembling for worship a few miles westwards of Neath. He then stated that on Christmas Day, the town of Neath had been disturbed by the appearance of a 'considerable body' of Revivalists from Llansamlet, 'singing vociferously' as they headed to take part in the opening of a Calvinistic Methodist chapel in the town. The writer, presumably overcoming his sensitivities, then attended the

evening service at the new chapel where he witnessed scenes which confirmed his worst fears.

> I found myself in the midst of an uproar which filled me with amazement and pain of mind. Clusters of men and women, boys and girls were leaping about the chapel, shouting, screaming and singing, throwing their arms aloft like maniacs and frequently embracing each other.

Needless to state, the writer deplored these 'outrages on decorum and right reason' which greatly harmed the cause of religion.[109]

Other writers took a more tolerant view of these proceedings, pointing out that such behaviour had Biblical precedent, and that the sincerity of those involved was unquestionable.

One factor which all of these correspondents pointed out was that the revival got its support largely from the uneducated working class. To quote from one correspondent:

> It is evident that the individuals who contribute to the noise and confusion are composed of the lower order and least educated part of the community.[110]

Another writer stated that

> Between the educated and the uneducated it must be expected that there should be a material difference in the manner and measure of revealing internal emotions.[111]

The events of 1828-9 certainly had a marked impact, both long term and short term. One of the correspondents drew attention to the improvement in behaviour in the Morriston area as a result of the revival.[112] People who had caused disturbance in the past by

> 'drunkenness, cursing and swearing'

had become

> 'sober and industrious, fearing God....'

There had been a big reduction in drinking:

> the public house keeper's complaint confirms the great change of habits, by stating he does not sell beer enough to pay his expenses since this revival.

This change in behaviour had been to the benefit of the managers of the local works who state:

> they now govern and regulate their concerns with much more ease than before.

In conclusion

> The best evidence of the conversion..... is in the change of life and habits as described in the people of Morriston.

The revival clearly had beneficial effects on the development of the local Nonconformist movement. Firstly, it gave increased impetus to the wave of chapel building which had already commenced a few years previously. Evidence also points to a substantial increase in chapel attendances. The references in David Davies's diary are not always clear but it is apparent that Mynyddbach and its daughter chapels gained many new members. One entry lists forty one new members being received 'yn y society' presumably at Mynyddbach itself during the period from November 1828 to January 1829.[113] An entry for 16 February 1829 lists the numbers of those from the different chapels in the group who were accepted into membership.

At	Mynyddbach	35
	Morriston	40
	'Coleg' (Landore)	42
	Cadle	9
	Velindre	7[114]

The cofiant of Daniel Evans, minister of Mynyddbach at the time of the revival, was written in 1835. This states that a total of 650 individuals were received into membership at Mynyddbach and its various daughter chapels.[115] Indeed, the chapel at Mynyddbach was now too small to continue the traditional practice of holding communion at Mynyddbach only, and not in the branch chapels. Consequently it was decided that the latter were to become separate churches, a policy which had been bitterly opposed by Lewis Rees.

Finally, it appears that the gains made as a result of the revival were not confined to the Independents; the Calvinistic Methodists in Morriston also acquired 240 new members.[116] Throughout Wales the 1829-28 revival is claimed to have gained 30,000 converts.[117]

Other acts of 'divine Providence' took place elsewhere in Wales during the next decades. In Swansea, however, such events seem to have been very subdued. The powerful revival which took place in certain parts of Wales in 1831-2 produced a very limited response in the Swansea area despite the presence of a cholera epidemic. Certainly, 1832 produced nothing to compare with 1828 in the experience of David Davies, whose only reference in his diary is to the occasional well attended service:

> Cwrdd gweddi da yn nhŷ Mary Hugh godre Treboeth er ein cadw rhag difrod y cholera morbus ofnadwy.[118]
>
> [good prayer meeting in the house of Mary Hugh at the bottom of Treboeth in order to keep us from the devastation of the terrible cholera.]

Conversely, Davies does mention a 'dywegiad' [revival] in the year 1833. This appears to have been confined to one place only, to judge by the following entry made in July:

> Dywegiad yn yr ysgol.[119]
>
> [revival in the school]

And again, shortly afterwards:

> Dywegiad yn yr ysgol.[120]

Such events, occurring sporadically, and limited to one cause, appear to have been fairly common during these years. Early in 1841, the English Wesleyan church in central Swansea experienced similar happenings, according to a letter written by a local correspondent. This source provides some useful detail about what was taking place.

> There are several young men and women who seem greatly alarmed at their spiritual state, and meet every morning about six o'clock for the purpose of prayer, and every evening for the same purpose, and remain until a late hour, sometimes past 12 o'clock, some weeping, others rejoicing in a kind of ecstasy, some loudly lamenting their state apparently in utter despair; their bodily actions and the contortions of their features with the uproarious noise of their devotions call together a great crowd to witness what they consider strange and unusual. Yesterday morning the preacher delivered a sermon on the occasion defending the practice.[121]

These events provide a reminder that emotional and unrestrained displays of religious zeal were not confined to the Welsh language churches. It is also significant that younger worshippers of both sexes were very much to the forefront in what was taking place. It may be deduced, however, that not everyone approved, to judge from the fact that the 'preacher' felt the need to defend such

activities. The writer himself had certain misgivings, remarking that it could result in bouts of insanity.

It was not until the cholera year of 1849 that Swansea experienced another revival. This, which took place after what Thomas Rees described as a period of 'spiritual declension'[122] affected much of industrial South Wales. Unlike earlier events, the revival was not associated with unrestrained emotional behaviour - 'no promiscuous singing, jumping etc'. Possibly, prevailing anxieties discouraged such behaviour. Instead, local chapels received substantial increases in attendance. Rees, supplies the following figures of new members gained by the local Independent churches as a result of the revival.[123]

Glandwr [Siloh]	156
Libanus Morriston	185
Horeb, Morriston	163
Ebenezer[Swansea]	87
Zion [Swansea]	150
Zoar [Swansea]	115
Canaan [Foxhole]	60
Bethel (Llansamlet)	72
Pentre Estyll [Siloam]	170
Mynyddbach	85

Such increases, coming before the Religious Census of 1851 must have been especially pleasing to the supporters of the movement.

However, wholehearted revivals such as took place in 1828 were henceforth to be absent from the Swansea area for the remainder of the century. The 1859 revival, which occurred with such vigour in other parts of Wales, made only a limited impact, and was felt mainly in the surrounding areas rather than in the town itself.[124] There was a slight suggestion of an old-style revival in 1865, when cholera again threatened,[125] but it was minimal compared with what had happened in the past and indeed, what was to happen again in the future. In this respect, however, the Swansea situation was reflecting a general trend according to Thomas Rees in his History published in 1883.

> The history of the nonconformist churches of Wales during the last 21 years has not been signalised.... by any widespread revival of religion.[126]

Instead, these years witnessed revivalist campaigns. These were modelled, to some extent at least, on the ideas of American revivalists whose writings had appeared in the earlier years of the century. The most influential were Calvin Colton, author of The History and Character of American Revivals (1832), and Charles Grandison Finney, whose Lectures on Revivals in Religion appeared in its Welsh translation in 1839. One of the basic ideas put forward in these writings was that revivals could be produced by human effort - premeditated revivals, as opposed to the spontaneous revivals traditional in Wales. The best known exponents of this philosophy were the Americans D W Moody and I Sankey who first appeared in Britain in 1875.

In Swansea, these revivalist activities appealed primarily to the English speakers. During the 1860s the town witnessed a number of minor campaigns of this nature.[127] Strangely enough, revivalist activities were much less prominent amongst the Welsh speakers in Swansea and elsewhere. In a paper entitled Y Diwygiad Crefyddol Presennol presented to the Undeb yr Annibynwyr 1875, Rev T Johns of Llanelli considered the impact of the current Moody and Sankey revival on other parts of Britain and compared it with the situation in Wales.[128] During the previous months, a number of Independent churches in various parts of Wales had experienced increasing membership. In the Swansea area, this trend had affected the churches in Llansamlet and Birchgrove.[129] However, what had taken place fell far short of what might have been expected. The reasons for this failure were to be found in the churches themselves. There was a tendency for the churches to lower their standards and thus allow membership to those undeserving of such privileges ['aelodau o fywyd llygredig'].[130] The effectiveness of the ministry itself was also in question; too many sermons lacked any sense of urgency and of conviction. Ultimately the absence of revival was because of the apathy ['claerindeb'][131] in the churches themselves. This, of course, was only one person's opinion, and for every person who agreed there were others who disagreed.

Thus, in the closing decades of the century the future of Nonconformity in Swansea seemed ambiguous. On the one hand there were ample indications of growth, with new initiatives, such as

the Forward Movement and the Salvation Army, new causes still being formed, and a vigorous programme of chapel building. On the other hand, Nonconformity, along with the other churches had failed to reach those sections of the community described in 1870 as 'the vast crowd of sinners, who swarm our streets and alleys.'[132] In addition, there was a danger that for many Nonconformists, religion simply meant something rather superficial, the fulfilling of certain customs as part of normal social routine.

It was against this background that there occurred the most remarkable, and perhaps most inexplicable event of its kind, namely the Revival of 1904-5. The origins and growth of this event belong to the history of Wales, rather than merely the history of Swansea.

In one respect, it was surprising that the Revival affected Swansea at all, given that such events had been missing from the religious life of the area for half a century. It may well be that a key factor here was the survival in and around Swansea of communities such as Cwmbwrla, Brynhyfryd, Landore, Morriston and Llansamlet where Welsh linguistic and cultural traditions were still powerful. Even many of the English speakers within these communities had been absorbed within the tradition to the extent that they, too, worshipped in chapels, albeit in English. The Revival, with its strong appeal to Welsh language Nonconformity, whilst not excluding others, was unlikely to be ignored in these

districts. Another factor, of course, was the proximity to Swansea of Loughor, birthplace of Evan Roberts, and one of the seed beds of the movement.

There was more to the Revival of 1904-5 than Evan Roberts, but certainly, he was its key figure. He paid a number of visits to the Swansea area between Christmas 1904 and January 1905 when his popularity was at its zenith. However, by that time the movement had already arrived in the district, in no small measure through the efforts of Sidney Evans who had assumed special responsibility for West Glamorgan. Whether by accident or by design Roberts concentrated his activities in the largely Welsh speaking communities in the industrial districts of Cwmbwrla, Llansamlet and Morriston. Where the revivalist did attend meetings in Central Swansea, it was at those chapels which had Welsh speaking congregations, such as Ebenezer Independent Chapel, and Trinity Calvinistic Methodist chapel . Such meetings were, however, attended by English speakers from the immediate locality as well as others who came from further afield. These meetings were conducted mainly in Welsh but English was not entirely absent, especially in the chapels in central Swansea. Even in Morriston Roberts' first meeting was preceded by a service held in English and in Welsh.[133]

These meetings were conducted, it need hardly be stated, in an atmosphere of great religious fervour, in crowded chapels with many forced to remain outside. Such scenes would have gladdened

the hearts of most revivalists, but, nevertheless, Roberts was not always entirely pleased with his reception. The first service which he attended at Morriston took place at Tabernacle Chapel on, Thursday 29th December 1904. An eye witness stated that the meeting was conducted in an atmosphere of 'indescribable fervour',[134] yet Roberts himself complained of a certain 'hardness' which was present.[135] Again, on the following day, when attending a second meeting at Tabernacle, Roberts expressed dissatisfaction, complaining that there was not sufficient of the spirit of prayer in the proceedings,[136] even though the service was constantly interrupted by those who sought to express their feelings. Interestingly, it would appear that Emlyn Jones, the minister of Tabernacle, was not aroused by the Revival to any great degree.[137] Later, on 5 January 1905 Roberts attended a meeting at Salem, Capel y Cwm, in the other side of the valley. Although the congregation had prepared itself in the usual way by fervent hymn singing, the revivalist himself appeared to be unhappy. He remained silently seated in the pulpit for about thirty minutes before finally rising to his feet to begin participating in the service which eventually ended in circumstances which satisfied those present.[138]

Any serious evaluation of the significance of the Revival, both locally and nationally must include a consideration of its long term consequences. The study will however, confine itself to the immediate effects of the Revival, especially as experienced by

local churches and as it was seen by contemporaries. Viewed from these perspectives a number of points emerge.

Firstly, the Revival witnessed an increase in interest and attendance at local chapels, along with increased membership. This would seem to be particularly true of those chapels with Welsh speaking congregations. The experience of Bethania Calvinistic Methodist church, Morriston illustrates what was happening elsewhere during the Revival period:

> Increased membership, marvellous religious meetings and amazing conversions of life long sinners.,[139]

The increase in membership was especially dramatic in Seion Baptist church, Morriston where it was stated that by 13 January 1905 there had been 219 applications for membership of which 140 had already been accepted.[140]

Similar membership gains were experienced in chapels situated in other parts of Swansea. At Bethesda Baptist church, in central Swansea the increase was as follows:

1904	January	Membership	263
1904	December	membership	283
1905	December	membership	304[141]

The impact of the revival was felt by English as well as Welsh language churches; the powerful Mount Pleasant English Baptist

Church recorded 100 baptisms when the movement was at its height.[142]

This increased activity also included the foundation of new branches. Apart from the foundation of Gorse Mission by certain members of the nearby Babell Calvinistic Methodist church, a new Sunday School branch was opened in Treboeth by members of Siloh Independent Church.[143] The Revival also coincided with the foundation of entirely new churches, as at Saron, Gendros, and the rebuilding of existing chapels, as at Libanus Baptist Church, Cwmbwrla.

What is surprising, however, is the limited amount of attention given to the Revival by many of the writers of local chapel histories, including those which appeared in the decades immediately following the event. John Williams, author of the history of Ebenezer Independent Church in Swansea which appeared in 1922 chose not to mention the Revival whatsoever, despite the fact that Roberts had actually visited the chapel concerned.[144] Williams was, in fact critical of some aspects of the Revival, especially the alleged neglect of preaching together with a decline in the quality of prayer.

> Amddifadrwydd gweddiau y diwygiad o'r gras hwn[145]
>
> [The prayers of the Revival were lacking in this grace.]

Similarly, the anonymous author of the history of Trinity Calvinstic Methodist Church which appeared in 1928 also failed to

make any reference to the Revival even though the revivalist had attended a meeting there which a witness described as being 'remarkable for its fire singing and spontaneity'.[146]

Other writers dealt with the Revival in a very perfunctory and even critical way. W J Rhys writing the history of Dinas Noddfa Baptist Church referred to the increased activity taking place in the church during the Revival, but then added,

> Yr oedd rhyw gymaint o fwg ynglyn â thân y Diwygiad.
>
> [there was a certain amount of smoke regarding the fire of the Revival.][147]

One of the sadder happenings coinciding with the Revival was the bitter disagreement which took place at Seion Baptist church in Morriston which had initially gained so much from these very events. In August 1905, a substantial section of the congregation left to found a new cause known as Soar, a short distance away. Two years later, Reverend J Gimblett, the respected minister of Seion was forced to resign, and the church went through a period of considerable difficulty ['siomedigaeth ar ôl siomedigaeth'][148] This unhappy time finally ended when a new minister, Rev David James was chosen in 1909.

In 1908, Richard Martin, who appeared before the Welsh Church Commission as a representative of the local Nonconformist committee formed to present information to the Commission stated that the Revival had had less effect upon Swansea than elsewhere, such as Rhondda.[149] Some chapels had benefited appreciably from

the Revival, but it was not possible to state how many individuals had been converted.[150] Indeed, as early as 1906, the minister of Tabernacle, Morriston, was complaining about the neglect ['esgeulustod'] of many who were failing to attend Sunday morning services.[151] In 1910, the minister made further reference to conditions which he deemed unsatisfactory:

> Gofidiwn wrth weled fod diddordeb yn ein moddion addysgol ac addoliadol wedi lleihau, yn enwedig yng nghyfarfodydd boreu Sabath nos Lun a nos Fercher.[152]
>
> [We are worried when we see that interest in our educational activities and worship has decreased, especially in the services on Sabbath morning, Monday night, and Wednesday night.]

With some justification could the author of the history of Tabernacle, Morriston, write that the impact of the Revival upon his church was short-lived:

> Byr fu parhad dylanwad y Diwygiad ar eglwys y Tabernacl.
>
> [The influence of the Revival on Tabernacle Church was short.][153]

It has been suggested that part of the problem was that the chapels were ready to accept people into membership without first insisting upon a probationary period as had happened previously. Moreover, unlike those of earlier times, the Revival of 1904-5 was not followed by similar events which could have consolidated the gains already made. Perhaps the real tragedy of the Revival was the outbreak of War in 1914 which did so much to dissipate what had been achieved

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CHAPTER 4

NONCONFORMITY AS A CULTURAL MOVEMENT

A local witness who appeared before a meeting of the Welsh Church Commission in 1908 made the following significant comment:

> ..the leaders of the churches conceived it to be the duty of the church to concern itself with life of the people in all respects - material as well as spiritual, social and religious.[1]

This concern for the well being of the whole person gave rise to what is often termed 'chapel culture'. This was found throughout Swansea but was most visible in the industrial communities. There, the chapels were for long the only sources of cultural inspiration, whilst other influences developed only slowly during the course of the nineteenth century. Moreover, the Nonconformist emphasis on self-improvement had a particular appeal in overwhelmingly working class communities.

The Nonconformist approach in this respect was not some optional extra, rather it stemmed from the basic aim of the movement, which was the spiritual well being of the individual. The clearest and most direct illustration of this principle is revealed in the long standing pre-occupation with the promotion of literacy as a means of acquiring knowledge and understanding of religion. An initiative adopted by the Llangyfelach Dissenters in the seventeenth century is particularly noteworthy in that it foreshadowed an approach which was to be universal in the nineteenth century. At Llangyfelach, week-night classes to teach

reading had been an important part of the activities of the Dissenting congregation which had been meeting since at least 1666 at Cilfwnwr farm, before transferring to nearby Tyrdwncyn in 1700:

> Yr oedd ysgol i ddysgu darllen wedi dechrau yn Nhy'r Dwncyn yn amser boreuaf sefydliad yr achos yn y lle[2]
>
> [a school to teach reading had started in Ty'r Dwncyn in the very early days of the foundation of the cause in the place]

Lewis Davies, who became minister of the congregation in 1693 appears to have been assiduous in promoting this activity. During his pastorate, the classes, which had previously met on week nights were held instead on Sunday afternoons following the usual service. Indeed, they were almost an extension of the latter. The chief activity which took place consisted of reading. In addition to the Bible, classes used books of catechism ['llyfrau pynciau'] such as the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly [Catechism byraf y Gymanfa], together with the writings of William Perkins. Deserving scholars received prizes of Bibles and other books. The Church Compact [Cyfamod Eglwysig] which Davies produced in 1700 included an exhortation to the congregation to read the Word of God to increase their knowledge.[3]

Evidence regarding the existence of this activity comes from the testimony of Morgan John, a blacksmith, of Tafarn y Berth, Morriston, which is dated 1720. John Davies stated that he had actually read this testimony in printed letters [mewn argraff lythrenau], and that it had frequently been repeated by a member of the family.

> Mi a ddysgais ddarllen Cymraeg yn ysgol ddarllen Ty'r Dwncyn. Yr oeddwn yn mynd yno i gael fy nysgu ganddynt ar nawn y Suliau. Yr oeddwn yn ddeg mlwydd oed pan dechreuais ddysgu darllen yn Ty'r Dwncyn yn y flwyddyn 1697. Yn Ty'r Dwncyn y dysgodd fy nhad ddarllen cyn i mi gael fy ngeni a dysgodd fy Mam ddarllen y Bibl Cymraeg yn ysgol darllen y Chwarelau Bach meddai hi cyn iddi briodi. Yr oedd yn dda iawn gennyf am Mr Thomas pregethwr Ty'r Dwncyn ac mae yn dda gennyf am Mr Davies sydd gyda hi yn bresennol.(4)
>
> [I learned to read Welsh in the reading school of Ty'r Dwncyn. I went there to be taught by them on Sunday afternoons. I was ten years old when I started learning to read in Ty'r Dwncyn in 1697. It was in Ty'r Dwncyn that my father learned to read before I was born and my mother learned to read the Welsh Bible in the Chwarelaubach reading school. she said before she married. I was very glad of Mr Thomas the Ty'r Dwncyn preacher and am very glad of Mr L Davies who is with us at present.]

The 'Chwarelau bach' mentioned in this statement was, like Ty'r Dwncyn, one of several congregations of Independent Dissenters linked in a kind of federation in the West Glamorgan area. It thus appears that the local Independent movement was active in seeking to improve the reading standards amongst is adherents.

Disappointingly, the 'school' at Ty'r Dwncyn appears to have ceased with the ending of Lewis Davies' pastorate some time before 1715. Subsequently, for many years, the local Dissenters avoided any involvement with such activities, apart from the private initiatives of individual ministers.

However, as the Dissent of the eighteenth century turned into the mass movement Nonconformity of the nineteenth century, the drive

for literacy acquired a new urgency. The Sunday schools, the chosen means of carrying out the campaign became an integral part of Nonconformity itself. Virtually all of the churches belonging to the most rapidly growing denominations established Sunday schools in the Swansea district during these years. The Independents at Mynyddbach later claimed to have established a school in 1784, and although this date should probably be treated with a certain degree of scepticism it would be surprising if this church were not in the forefront in this respect.[5] However, in the town itself the first Sunday school was founded in 1795 by the English congregation of the Huntingdon Chapel in the fashionable Burrows area.[6] The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists at Crug Glas followed suit in 1805,[7] doubtless encouraged by the example of the sister church at Salem Capel y Cwm, whose Sunday school had been founded during the previous year.[8] Subsequently, branches of the Crug Glas school were established at several locations in the surrounding area, including 'yr hen gastell Morris' [Morris Castle], on the hilltop overlooking Landore, as well as at Penfilia, Pentre Estyll, Cwmbwrla and Cockett.[9] The Baptists, too, at Back Lane, established a Sunday school in 1809, a sign that the days of conflict were now receding.[10]

As the numbers of new Nonconformist churches multiplied, it became normal to establish a Sunday school as part of the new cause. This was what happened in the case of the new Independent church formed in Castle Street, Swansea, in 1814[11] and similarly at Bethel, Llansamlet, in 1818[12]. One of the earliest Sunday

schools was set up in 1804 as part of the new Calvinistic Methodist Church at Philadelphia, in Morriston.[13] In this case the Sunday school was founded despite the misgivings of those who believed that it represented the intrusion of secular activity into the Sabbath.[14] It would appear that such opposition was not confined to Philadelphia. Another account, written later in the nineteenth century states,

> nad oedd llawer o frodyr yr amseroedd hynny yn canfod dim gwerth yn yr ysgol sul; ac yn wrthwynebwyr i'w phleidwyr.
>
> [many of the brothers in those times did not recognise any value in the Sunday school; and were opponents to its supporters].[16]

A common tendency was for the Sunday school to precede the church. Thus, the school founded at Llwynbrwydrau in 1806[17] by Salem, Capel y Cwm was the origin of Ebenezer, Llwynbrwydrau, in 1834. Similarly, the Sunday school founded at Cadle in 1819 by local members of Mynyddbach became Bethlehem Independent church in 1839.[18] Babell Calvinistic Methodist church founded in 1851 in the Cwmbwrla district emerged out of a Sunday school formed in the area some years previously by local members of Trinity church in central Swansea.[19] The Sunday school thus became a key factor in the growth of the Nonconformist movement as a whole in the district.

It should not be thought that these early initiatives met with immediate overwhelming success. The school at Crug Glas attracted very few members at first,[20] whilst reference has already been

made to the failure of the 'school' at Morriston mentioned in the diary of David Davies.[21] Similarly, a branch Sunday school established by Salem Capel y Cwm at nearby Llysnewydd collapsed soon after 1829 because of lack of support.[22] Despite these setbacks, the growth of the movement during these years was unmistakeable. An enquiry into education provision which was carried out in 1833, gives some information about the Sunday schools belonging to the Nonconformist churches within the borough of Swansea.[23] This is shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1 : Sunday schools in the borough of Swansea in 1833. Population : 13694.

Denomination	Schools	Pupils	Foundation
Calvinists	3	285	-
Independents	2	320	-
Wesleyans	1	221	-
'Calvinistic Baptists'	1	280	1830
Baptists	1	170	1828
Baptiste	1	111	1831
Baptists	1	56	1833
Total	10	1443	

A year later, 'The Cambrian' in reporting a meeting of Welsh Sunday Schools held at Trinity Calvinistic Methodist chapel also referred to the numbers attending Nonconformist Sunday schools in the town.

> ...at least 2000 children are every Sabbath taught to read in the various Dissenting chapels in the town.[24]

In 1838-9 the new Royal Institution of South Wales circulated the various places of worship in the borough with a request for information in order to compile a statistical survey of religious accommodation. The extant replies provide additional information about the local Sunday school provision. Table 2 shows the situation 'within the gates', in central Swansea, as well as 'without the gates' in the remainder of the borough.

Table 2 : Nonconformist Sunday Schools in the borough of Swansea 1838-9[25]

(a) Within the gates

Church/Denomination	Language	School (#/X)*	Pupils
Quakers	E	X	-
Huntingdon	E	#	150
Tower Lane Primitive Methodists	E	#	130
Wesleyan Methodists	E	#	160
Wesleyan Methodists	W		120
Mount Pleasant Baptist	E	#	120
Bethesda Baptist	W	#	200 av
York Place Baptist	E	#	130
Ebenezer Independent	W	#	190
Castle Street Independent	E	#	230
Trinity Calvinist Methodist	W	#	
Greenhill Calvinist Meth.	W	#	200
Unitarians	E	X	
Unitarians	W	X	
Bethel	E & W	X	
Total			1630

* # = Sunday school in existence
X = no Sunday school

b) Without the gates

Church/Denomination	Location	Language	School	Pupils
Silo Independent	Landore	W	#	Yes
Baptist Chapel [Dinas Noddfa]	Graig Trewyddfa	W	#	Yes
Upper Chapel, Independents [Libanus]	Morriston	W	#	180
Lower Chapel, Calvinistic Meth. [Philadelphia]	Morriston	W	#	Yes
Bethel, Independents	Llansamlet	W		100
Cwm, Calv.Methodists	Llansamlet	W		
Baptist Chapel [Tabernacle]	Foxhole	W		
Independent Chapel [Canaan]	Foxhole	W	No	

The true extent of the movement was, in fact, greater than these figures suggest, since branch schools appear to have been omitted from these statistics. Thus, in 1837, Trinity Calvinistic Methodist Church, Swansea, had schools at Ty Halen, Port Tennant, and Cwmbwrla, as well as that held in the chapel itself.[26]

An important point which emerges from an analysis of this information is that those denominations which were attracting vast support were also active in establishing Sunday schools. Conversely, the least popular denominations were making little or no apparent effort to form Sunday schools.[27] In this respect, they stood apart not only from the rest of the Nonconformist movement but even the Established Church.

The increasing popularity and importance of the Sunday schools in the 1840s in the Swansea area are clearly evident from two major parliamentary inquiries which were produced at this time. The first was carried out by the Children's Employment Commission in 1842. This revealed that the majority of local children and young persons who were interviewed for the purpose of this inquiry were, or had been, pupils at Sunday school. In addition, the Sunday school was, in most cases the only type of schooling which had been experienced (see Appendix).

The second inquiry was the Welsh Education Commission of 1846-7. This is for the Sunday schools what the Religious Census of 1851 was for the Nonconformist churches. Like the Religious Census, the statistical information compiled by the Education Commission is not without its weaknesses. The commissioners and their assistants were heavily dependent on chapel ministers and officials, whose competence could not be guaranteed and who, 'in general had neither the records nor the habits of mind corresponding to such an enquiry'.[28] Moreover, it was not always easy to distinguish individual Sunday schools. Branch schools were a particular problem; in some cases the branch might be included in the return for the main school, but in others it might have been recorded separately. In addition, no information whatsoever was obtained from certain chapels regarding their Sunday school provision. Thus, despite the 'utmost exertions', a number of Swansea chapels do not appear in the lists contained in the Reports.[29] These included the prominent English Baptist

Church at Heathfield (Mount Pleasant) in central Swansea as well as the equally important English Wesleyan Methodist church in nearby Goat Street. Little wonder, then, that R R W Lingen, the commissioner responsible for reporting in the Swansea area was forced to admit that the Sunday school tables, 'both in their parochial and summed form must be taken to be the nearest approximations to the truth which....I could collect from the best informed parties.[30]

Nevertheless, allowing for these shortcomings, and despite the notoriety with which they have been surrounded, the Reports provide the most detailed information available about Sunday schools in Swansea during the first half of the nineteenth century. Firstly, as has already been demonstrated, they are a useful source for supplying the names and dates of foundation of local Sunday schools. As such, they serve to confirm the evidence of earlier sources as to the extent of the movement by the middle years of the century.

Secondly, the Reports also give the membership figures of the Sunday schools. Needless to state, these figures must be treated with considerable caution; they must be regarded as being only rough guides to the true situation. Figures of membership at the local Sunday schools are provided in Table 3[31].

TABLE 3 : MEMBERSHIP OF LOCAL SUNDAY SCHOOLS 1846-7

Parish	Population (1841)	Schools	Scholars under 15	Scholars over 15	Total	%
Llangyfelach (1) Penderry	1203	3	130	94	224	18.6
(2) Clase	5924	7	588	347	935	15.7
Llansamlet	3375	8	448	293	741	21.9
St Johns	1037	1	96		96	9.2
Swansea	19115	17	1256	426	1682	10.3

It will be noted that the membership figures were highest in the outlying districts which included the growing industrial communities. Siloh Independent church, Landore, with its membership of 276 scholars far outstripped the remainder, although certain of the Sunday schools in Morriston were also flourishing. Sunday schools in the central Swansea area, such as that attached to Bethesda Welsh Baptist Church could also demonstrate healthy membership figures. In addition it must also be borne in mind that membership figures of Sunday schools belonging to some of the most prominent Nonconformists were omitted. Nevertheless, the membership figures for Sunday schools in the area as a whole, and in the central district in particular, tend to suggest that the movement played a significant part in its educational provision.

One further item of statistics is that relating to Sunday school attendance. Whilst the integrity of those who supplied these figures, is again not in question, doubts must exist over the accuracy of the figures themselves. The 'numbers who usually attend' figures are particularly ambiguous. Moreover, in many cases the membership figure is identical with that for average attendance. Thus, these figures for attendance are presented on the rather questionable basis that figures of any sort are better than none at all. (Table 4.)

Despite the progress made, the appeal of the Nonconformist Sunday school, and indeed of the movement as a whole, including the schools of the Anglican Church, continued to be less than

TABLE 4

ATTENDANCE AT SUNDAY SCHOOL 1847-7

14.3

Parish	Population 1841	Schools	Attendance	%
Llangyfelach				
(1) Penderry	1203	3	228	18.8
(2) Clase	5924	7	871	14.7
Llansamlet	3375	8	719	21.3
St Johns	1037	1	96*	9.2
Swanea	19117	17	1519	7.9
Total	30555	36	3433	

* Estimated figure based on membership

universal. One rather surprising statement contained in the 1847 Report for Swansea was that the local Sunday school movement had actually declined in recent years. A comparison between the figures collected by the Education Commission and those compiled by the Royal Institution and published in its Annual Report of 1841 suggested a decline of 11.1% in attendance[33].

This trend was confirmed by Rev Daniel Davies of Bethesda.[34] He believed that this was due to a decline in attendance by adults. Part of the explanation was the inadequate accommodation, which meant that adults were forced to learn alongside children before whom they felt embarrassed when they made mistakes. Again, lack of funds meant that the schools could not afford to purchase teaching aids which could add interest. Another problem concerned the deficiencies of the teachers who were 'good persons' but 'very incompetent in point of information'. He also complained that the prevalence of Sunday working in the copper industry was impeding attendance, a point which was made by R W Jones in his report to the 1842 Employment Commission.[35] Finally, there was a tendency for young males to abandon the Sunday school in pursuit of more 'manly' activities: 'as soon as they grew to be eighteen or nineteen years old they quitted the schools, thinking themselves men, and...they must join in the drinking habits of their seniors.'[36]

One other factor possibly influencing the Sunday school attendance of children and young persons was the provision of day

schools.[37] It may be that the Sunday schools benefited in those areas where day school provision was least adequate. This may at least partly account for the variations in Sunday school attendance which have already been noted in the local area. Certainly, Sunday school membership was highest in those areas where provision of day school education was lowest. This is shown in Table 5.

Table 5 : Numbers attending day and Sunday Nonconformist Sunday Schools in the Swansea area, 1846-7[38]

Parish etc	Population (1841)	Day School scholars	Sunday School Scholars to 15 yrs
Swansea	19115	2122	1256
St Johns	1037	158	96
Llangyfelach	9394	757	891
Llansamlet	3375	321	448

Against this must be placed the evidence provided by a sample group of 23 pupils at the Hafod copperworks school, each of whom also attended Sunday school. Children who attended day schools were thus also likely to attend the Sunday schools.

To conclude this particular issue, the evidence to support the claim that Sunday schools in Swansea were experiencing a decline in membership in the 1840s is insufficient. It further ignores the fact that everywhere within the district, Sunday schools were being founded in increasing numbers along with new chapels.

The 1847 Report stated that Sunday school activities were based on a mixture of 'worship, discussion and elementary instruction'.[39] At its simplest level, this meant teaching pupils to read the Bible. Lingen, who visited Ebenezer Sunday school, Swansea on 21 February 1847 noted that most of the classes were conducted mainly 'on the old plan of continuously reading the Scriptures'.[40] His assistant, William Morris, who had visited the Sunday school at the nearby Bethesda Baptist church in the previous week described how the pupils were taught using Mimpriss's Lessons, 'which are framed on tins and hung from the ceiling of the schoolroom.[41]

Memorising information was another activity which received much attention. Individuals and schools achieved considerable feats of memory by learning lengthy passages from the Scriptures. A correspondent who attended the annual meeting of the Sunday School Association of the local Independent churches which was held in June 1831 at Ebenezer Church, Swansea, notified the readers of Seron Gomer of what had been achieved in this respect[42] (see over).

The meeting also included the awarding of prizes to deserving individuals. One such person was a John Alban of Ebenezer, who received his prize of a Bible and commentary of Peter Williams for learning 183 chapters of the Scriptures in the previous twelve months.[43]

School	Chapters learnt	Verses learnt
Ebenezer	414	1848
Scetty	135	3011
Cadle	67	1671
Mynyddbach	98	1417
Glandwr	88	1449
Pentregethin	114	3308

A variation of this learning of scriptural passages was the pwnc, which was the memorising of doctrinal problems in the form of questions and answers, using scriptural proofs. The Sunday schools usually took great pride in demonstrating their knowledge, often at inter-church meetings held for this purpose. David Davies the bookbinder of Treboeth makes a number of references to such practices, as in his diary for 18 March 1821.

> In the morning, the school of Morriston colected about 7 o'clock when David Robert questioned us. We went from there to Swansea together with the schools of Clydach and Bethel. In Ebenezer the school of Clydach began and were questioned by Dd. Robert spake well indeed then the school of Scety were questioned they were a small boys then Bethel and Mynyddbach questioned by Mr Davies Wm.Jones Bridgend and Mr Davies Ebenezer.(44)

This preoccupation with memorising information continued well into the century. Thus, writing in 1861, John Jenkins, an assistant commissioner appointed under the Education Commission of that year wrote:

> Beyond reading, the principal subject of instruction is getting up a passage of Scripture or of hymns by rote for recitation in public - often in the place of worship.(45)

Dr L W Evans has suggested that Sunday school activity depended to some extent on the nature of the community.[46] In the more settled communities, where there was some provision for day school education, the Sunday schools could proceed beyond the most elementary activities. This point, however, would appear to possess only a limited validity. The schools in Swansea, described in 1847 as serving a 'superior population'[47] to that found elsewhere in South Wales do not appear to have followed programmes of study which were exceptional.

Another factor which could influence Sunday school activities was the presence of adults. This, of course, was a very pronounced feature of Welsh Sunday schools and could, on occasions, lead to more sophisticated activities than reading and memorising the Scriptures. Adult teaching could involve discussion which had the 'undoubted advantage of developing occurrences in thought and independence in the formation of judgement'.[48] The presence of adults made possible a closer examination of doctrinal issues than would otherwise have been the case. Indeed, this had led to the allegation, wrongly, that questions of doctrine took precedence over the use of the schools as vehicles for moral guidance.

Almost inevitably, the Nonconformist Sunday schools were hampered by the lack of adequate resources. The shortage of books was a particular problem; in 1861 it was stated that -

> Nothing can be more meagre than the books generally in use in teaching reading, which were 'singularly wanting in variety of subject matter, of language and of illustration.[49]

The extent of this problem in Swansea relative to other places is difficult to determine. The comments made by Rev Daniel Davies in 1847 about the inadequacy of the available resources have already been noted.[50] Materials were on occasion produced by local ministers, such as the booklet produced by Rev Daniel Evans which was intended for the Sunday school of his own church at Mynyddbach as well as those of other neighbouring churches of the same denomination.[51] This took the form of a series of questions with set answers which the pupils had to memorise. It was in sufficient use for it to be reprinted in 1845, which may either mean that it was popular or that there were few alternatives.

In one respect the local Nonconformists were particularly fortunate in that they had a local source of books in the publishing business owned by the Independent minister Evan Griffiths (Ieuan Ebblig). Not surprisingly, Griffiths published a number of books for Sunday schools during the middle years of the century. Thus, in 1849 he published a history of the Bible by Joseph Owen, which was entitled 'Hanes ymddangosiad y Bibl.....Gyfansoddwyd at Wasanaeth yr ysgolion Sabbothol' [History of the appearance of the Bible.....produced for the service of Sunday Schools.][52] Griffiths himself produced some of the materials which he published, such as his Pwnc Ysgol, neu holiadau ac Atebion Wedi ei Seilio ar Actau 2, [School Catechism or questions and answer based upon Acts 2,] which appeared in 1856.[53]

This publication also contained the announcement that Griffiths was able to supply a wide range of materials for use in Sunday schools ['Mae amrywiaeth mawr o bob math o Lyfrau Ysgol Pynciau o Wahanol faintioli etc bob amser ar law'.]

The extent to which these books and pamphlets were used in local chapel Sunday schools is difficult to determine. However, it would be surprising if some were not included in the library of 130 books which Ebenezer Independent church was reported as possessing in 1847[54]. Ebenezer was not unique in this respect; in 1849 The Cambrian reported that eighteen schools in the Swansea Sunday Schools Union owned nine libraries containing a total of 1113 books.[55]

Linked with the lack of material resources were deficiencies regarding human resources. Here, it was not a question of quantity, but of quality. There were many individuals who were only too willing to give up their free time to serve as Sunday school teachers, but as Rev Davies had observed, enthusiasm and dedication were not sufficient. The fact that many chapel ministers were themselves men of limited education, at least during the first half of the century, hardly helped this problem. Consequently, the authors of the 1847 Education Reports were scathing in their comments on the inadequate training of those who taught in the Sunday schools. In those Swansea schools which were visited by the commissioner, or his assistant, the training of the teachers ranged from week night meetings addressed by the

minister, as took place at Bethesda Baptist Church[56], to nothing at all, as occurred at Salem Capel y Cwm in Llansamlet.[57] On the other hand, it is possible to dismiss too lightly the calibre of many of those who became teachers at the Sunday schools:

> Among these are found the great proportion of the contributors to the periodical literature of the Principality, the successful competitors in the literary associations of the country (the Eisteddfodau), many of the most popular preachers and eminent ministers in the dissenting denominations and several in the Church.[58]

The Sunday schools were usually conducted in whatever language was most practical. This meant that even the Welsh medium churches which were in a majority in the Swansea area in the mid century had few qualms about using English. Thus, Bethesda Baptist church had separate English and Welsh Sunday school classes with the English being 'by far the most numerous'.[59] Even the Baptist churches in the outlying districts, such as Dinas Noddfa Landore, and Caersalem Newydd Treboeth, conducted their Sunday schools using a mixture of English and Welsh.[60] Nor was this approach confined to one denomination. The Independent church at Ebenezer, in central Swansea, also had a Sunday school with several English classes, although Welsh was the dominant language overall.[61] In this respect, the Swansea chapels reflected the situation in Glamorgan as a whole at this time. This is summarised in Table 6.

Table 6 : Language usage in Glamorgan Sunday Schools in 1847[62]

Denomination	Schools	Welsh	English	Both
C.Methodist	90	65	4	21
Independent	99	52	5	42
Baptist	58	8	5	45

This situation where the two languages existed side by side may have reflected the influx of English speakers and of the anglicisation of those who were children of local Welsh speakers at a time when Nonconformity did not yet have the means to build sufficient chapels which catered separately for both languages.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Sunday schools remained popular, even as the provision of day school education improved. Indeed, it has been claimed that the 'golden era' of the Sunday schools took place during these years. This was partly because the Sunday schools themselves attempted to improve their appeal sometimes by adopting the practices of the day schools. Perhaps, however, the real reason for the continued popularity of the Sunday schools was as a result of the prestige and influence which Nonconformity enjoyed as a whole during the later decades of the century.

It is easy to succumb to the temptation to exaggerate the value of the Sunday schools. Conversely, much of the often scathing

criticism to which they were subjected during the nineteenth century was unjustified. When Henry Williams, minister of St John's Swansea, and curate of Llangyfelach stated in 1842 that the Sunday schools did not compensate adequately for the lack of day schools, he was expressing a view with which many of his local Nonconformist contemporaries would have fully concurred.[63] The schools were organisations with strictly limited aims which met, at the most, for a few hours each week. They did not provide an all round education because they were not intended to do so.

The criticism of the schools when measured solely as providers of religious knowledge also has limited validity. Much of this criticism comes from the first half of the nineteenth century, when the schools were still relatively new, and those conducting them were inexperienced. Also, much of the evidence against the schools was collected by individuals whose attitudes and methods were highly questionable. It is in this light that the evidence of R H Franks, who helped to compile the Children's Employment Report of 1842, and whose tour of the industrial districts of South Wales included Swansea must, be viewed:

> Great neglect appears to prevail in the different Sunday schools in the various districts which seem to me to be most inefficient if I am to judge of their worth by the Scriptural knowledge possessed by the children..... The present condition of religious and secular knowledge in the rising generation of South Wales demands very careful reflection.[64]

In addition, the attacks upon the teaching methods employed in the schools, especially the emphasis on rote learning is misplaced

since such methods were a reflection of prevailing thinking, and were found in all kinds of schools. Likewise, the complaints about lack of resources, both material and human, must be considered in the context of the times. In these respects the Sunday schools compared at least favourably with many of the day schools of the period. Above all, any assessment of the value of the Sunday schools must also take into consideration the truly enormous challenges which they faced in teaching individuals of varying ages and abilities, whose attendance would often have fluctuated considerably.

Having considered some of the criticisms directed at the Sunday schools which, it must be emphasised, were largely conducted in Swansea by the Nonconformists, it is now opportune to consider their contribution to the education and culture of the local communities. At the very least, the schools were the sole means by which many people were able to acquire an education, limited though it was. In many cases, they were able to provide rather more; no less a person that R R W Lingen stated that the Sunday schools as a whole were 'real fields of mental activity'.[65] He also stated that it was because of the Sunday schools that 'the younger portion of the adult labouring classes can generally read, or are in the course of learning to read the Scriptures in their mother tongue'.[66] It was largely through the efforts of the Nonconformist Sunday schools that in 1861 commissioner John Jenkins could report that the vast majority of people had become 'well versed'[67] in Scripture knowledge. Indeed, Jenkins even

suggested that the Sunday schools provided a national system of religious education which might well serve to inspire improvements in secular education.[68]

The schools had other consequences, many of which were of a less direct nature, but perhaps their greatest contribution was as a much needed civilising influence. In the Hafod area of St John's parish, it was stated in 1847 that the Sunday schools, which had been introduced some 27 years previously had been responsible for 'the great improvement which was said to have taken place in the manners of the district.'[69] Of course, there were limitations as to what was achieved in this respect. There were many individuals whose lives remained untouched, directly or indirectly by the influence of the Sunday schools. Unsavoury behaviour, especially drunkenness, remained one of the besetting sins of the Swansea district. The Nonconformist Sunday schools should be judged for what they achieved, rather than by what they failed to achieve.

The local Nonconformists always regarded their Sunday schools with particular affection and respect. It was this preoccupation with Sunday schools which helps to explain the rather less enthusiastic attitude which they adopted for many years towards day schools. There were, of course, other more practical reasons; the Nonconformists had only very limited resources, especially during the early decades of the century. Again, day school education was likely to be a somewhat unrealistic objective since it clashed

with the usual pattern of daily activity. For those who desired such education the locality already possessed a number of day schools, mainly of the 'private venture' kind.

Despite these factors, however, there were some individuals within the Nonconformist movement who sought better provision of day school education. An early illustration of this took place at Landore, in 1824, where the local members of Mynyddbach church erected a building known as 'Y Coleg', where an English day school was to exist alongside a Welsh Sunday school.[70] Apart from being the origin of the powerful Siloh Church, the project was also apparently successful as a school for a number of years. There was even a library, which was set up in 1830 by John Jones ('Jones y tutor'), who came from the Llanelli area to become one of the first teachers at the school.

Presumably, it was 'Y Coleg' to which Rev Henry Williams was referring when he included a day school at 'Glandwr' in a statement about local education facilities which was contained in the 1842 Children's Employment Report.[71] However, by 1847, the day school component appears to have ceased; it received no mention in the Education Report of that year. Doubtless, the foundation of the nearby Hafod copper works schools at that time reduced the need for the day school facilities offered at 'Y Coleg'. Many local chapel goers were employed at the Hafod works and were required to fund the schools by means of a wage deduction of one penny a week.[72] Moreover, the new schools had much to

offer. They were non-denominational, despite the Anglicanism of their founders, as well as offering a standard of education hardly equalled in Wales, let alone Swansea, for many years.[73] Little wonder, then that in 1854 one John Jones of Pentre Estyll was moved to express his gratitude in a poem entitled '<u>Cân er canmoliaeth i J H Vivian Ysw., AS, a'i feibion am sefydlu a chynnal ysgolion yr Hafod i Blant eu Gweithwyr</u>.'[74]

[A song of praise to J H Vivian Esq., MP, and his sons for establishing and maintaining schools in the Hafod for the children of their workmen.]

The decade which witnessed the Welsh Education Reports also saw increasing Nonconformist interest in day school education. This was stimulated by the achievements in this respect of the Established Church. Sir James Graham's Factory Bill which was introduced in 1843 provoked especially strong feelings since its education proposals were held to favour the Anglican Church. In Swansea, a vigorous protest campaign was launched in which Rev Daniel Davies of Bethesda Baptist Church played a leading part. <u>The Cambrian</u> reported that fifty-nine petitions from the congregations of Protestant Dissenters and of other denominations had been presented to the local MP's.[75]

More positively, attempts were made to improve the facilities for day school education in the locality. In 1843, a non-denominational British school was established in the vestry of

Bethesda chapel with the aim of serving the needs of the mainly Welsh speaking population of that part of the town.[76] However, when inspected in 1847, the conditions in the school did not impress assistant commissioner Morris.[77] At that time it was stated that the Nonconformists were hopeful of replacing their inadequate facilities with a much larger school which was much needed in the district.

In fact, it was the Nonconformists in the industrial localities outside the town itself who were most active in providing school facilities. This was particularly noticeable in the eastern side of the valley, where the local industrialists had been more assiduous in promoting Anglican schools than was the case elsewhere. At the southern end, the Grenfells, owners of a number of the local smelting works, had been involved in the provision of education since the early years of the century. Subsequently, in 1839 they added a new infants' school followed in 1842 by a school for girls.[78] In Llansamlet village, the Smiths, the local coal owners, had been involved in the provision of education since the time of John Smith (d.1797). In 1841, Charles Henry Smith provided accommodation for what the local Anglican clergyman described as a Madam Bevan school.[79] Two years later, Smith took over the school, which was funded by the weekly wage deductions from his workers of one penny in the pound. In 1847, the master employed at the school was an Independent, although his supervision was entrusted to the local clergyman.[80] Against this picture of co-operation between people of different

denominational allegiances, the behaviour of Emily, wife of Charles Henry Smith, struck a particularly discordant note according to one writer who stated that Mrs Smith used her influence 'i yrru allan gyda gwaradwydd o ysgol Pwll y Cwm ar fore ddydd Llun y plant o Dy Cwrdd y Cwm am na buasant yn dyfod i Eglwys y plwyf y Sul blaenorol'. [to drive out those who had not come to the parish church the previous Sunday.][81]

This was done even when the children's fees had been paid. This school subsequently became part of the National School Movement.

The presence of these Anglican schools may possibly have stimulated the local chapels into making their own arrangements. In 1850 the congregation at Salem established their own school which could accommodate 150 children.[82] W Samlet Williams states that in the early days of its existence, the school was characterised by a somewhat relaxed approach:

> ..trugaredd oedd yn teyrnasu yn ei hanes ymhob cyfeiriad.
>
> [kindness was ruling in its history in every direction.][83]

A visiting British school inspector was less charitable. He described it in 1851-2 as 'a village school of poor accommodation and defective character.[84] In time, the affairs of the school were put on a more formal footing. A committee was formed, along with a treasurer and secretary. For some years it was under the joint control of Salem and the nearby Dillwyn Spelter Works.[85]

Meanwhile, the congregation at the daughter church at Ebenezer Llwynbrwydrau also founded a school in 1860.[86] The Independents at Bethel, Llansamlet, eventually followed the example of their Calvinist Methodist brethren by establishing their own school adjacent to the chapel building in 1871. The Bethel Independents also established a school in later years in the developing Birchgrove district.[87]

On the other side of the valley, the congregation of Siloh Independent church, Landore, in keeping with its traditions, succeeded in establishing a British day school in 1865 in nearby Brynhyfryd, using a building constructed three years earlier as a Sunday school.[88] This day school, which began with 122 pupils, had the enthusiastic support of the minister, Rev Thomas Thomas, who acted as one of the teachers. The project was sufficiently successful for the building to require enlargement shortly afterwards. In addition to a day school, the building also accommodated evening classes. One of those who taught at these evening classes was Richard Martin, later to be knighted for his services to education in Swansea.[89] In the nearby district of Treboeth, a school was also held in a room belonging to Mynyddbach Independent church.[90] Schools associated with Nonconformist chapels also appeared in central Swansea. Thus, in April 1861 Rev William Williams of Bethany English Calvinistic Methodist church established a day school in a building also to be used as a Sunday school in the Strand area. This proved to be a success, possibly aided by its non-denominational character:

> No coercion in any way was to be used to bias the minds of the children to any sectarian influence.[91]

An inspection carried out in 1866 by officials of the British and Foreign Society earned the school a commendation.[92]

Subsequent legislation, especially the Education Act of 1870 did not preclude Nonconformity from continued involvement in the day school movement. Thus immediately following the 1870 Act, chapel goers in the Cadle district used the new legislation to establish a new school in their locality. The leading figure behind the project was Reverend Hirgwm Thomas of Bethlehem Independent church (1869-76)[93]. The tendency was for the schools which had previously been founded and maintained by individual chapels to be taken over by the new boards, however. Thus, the Brynhyfryd school of Siloh chapel was taken over by the new Swansea School Board in 1875, which paid £750 for the building which continued to be used as a Sunday school.[94] Similar arrangements were made on the other side of the valley, where in 1877 the Llansamlet Higher School Board took over the three British Schools in the area for the sum of £1,050.[95] However, this did not mean the end of the connection between the chapels and the day schools, at least for some years. This was because some ministers occupied places on the new boards. Thus Rev Thomas Thomas of Siloh had a seat on the Swansea Board,[96] whilst the Llansamlet School Board was largely created through the efforts of local Nonconformists.[97]

The cultural and intellectual attainments of many local chapel goers were considerably limited by the inadequacies of their education, particularly during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Yet, even at that time, chapel congregations included more than a sprinkling of literate individuals as evidenced by the flourishing world of Welsh language publishing which was directed mainly towards chapel goers An especially prominent element in this activity was the production of periodicals and journals often associated with a particular denomination. Some of these publications were short-lived, leaving their unfortunate promoters falling into a mass of debt. Even so, these features can be considered to have contributed something, however limited, to the cultural life of the period.

The first successful Welsh language periodical originated in Swansea. This was 'Seren Gomer', founded in 1814 as a weekly newspaper by a group of local businessmen consisting of John Voss, John Walters, David Walters, Thomas Williams and David Jenkins, who appointed the Baptist minister Joseph Harris,'Gomer', to the key post of editor.[98] Harris' qualifications for his new post included the fact that in 1806 he had co-operated with Titus Lewis to produce a periodical entitled Y Drysorfa Efengylaid, which had, however, come to an abrupt end after only two editions. His new venture was intended to appeal to a wide section of the reading public, and included 'bob math o newyddion cartref a thramor gwleidyddiol a chrefyddol, hanesion am frwydrau pwysicaf y rhyfel, ynghyd â cherddi'r beirdd a phob math o gyfraniadau llenyddol a

dueddai at am ddiffyn, puro a Lledaenu'r iaith Gymraeg' [every kind of foreign and home news, political and religious, accounts of the most important compaigns of the war, along with the poetry of the bards and every literary contribution that might tend to defend, purify and extend the Welsh language.][99]

Launched in what could be regarded as a blaze of publicity, the new publication was a financial disaster, and in August 1815 it ceased, leaving in its wake debts of over £1000. Apparently undeterred by this setback, Harris continued without his backers, and with his son John Ryland operating the equipment purchased from the now bankrupt printer, the paper re-emerged in 1818. For the next two years it appeared fortnightly, after which it became a monthly, which remained the pattern for the rest of the century.

Seren Gomer was not intended as a local publication, and it had a circulation throughout Wales and beyond. However, it is likely that local circumstances encouraged the venture to be launched in Swansea. The August 1819 edition states that 126 copies out of a total production of 1660 were sold in the immediate area.[100] Most of those sold locally were distributed by the publisher himself, the remainder through agents in the growing industrial communities above the town. It is hardly coincidence that the first English language and Welsh language newspapers in Wales were established in the same town and at about the same time.

Seren Gomer played its part in the spiritual and cultural life of local chapel goers; another was the bookshop and publishing business of the Independent minister Evan Griffiths 'Ieuan Ebblig' as he was otherwise known, after his birthplace near Maesteg. This began in 1830, when Griffiths took over the bankrupt printing business of J A Williams at 128 High Street Swansea. This marked the beginning of a career of writing, publishing and selling books which occupied almost all his life before Griffiths' death in 1873.[101]

As an author, it must be admitted that Griffiths' achievements were modest and require little examination. More important was his work as a translator from English to Welsh. What has been described as 'the greatest achievement of his life' was Griffiths' translation of Matthew Henry's Bible Commentary although demand for copies of this work was somewhat less than anticipated. However, more significant from the point of view of their impact on contemporary thought were the translations of the writings of the eminent American evangelist C G Finney, entitled Lectures on revivals of religion (1839), and his Sermons which appeared shortly afterwards in 1841. The first of these works in particular, aroused much interest because of the ideas which they presented about the origins of revivals. The other translations, whilst dealing with religious and moral problems tended to be of a more ephemeral character.

As a publisher, Griffiths was in the fortunate position of making sure that his works appeared in print, along with those of others. The bulk of these publications had a religious content. Those which were intended for use by children in the Sunday schools have already been considered. Then, for the more erudite of his adult readers, there were works which examined matters of doctrine. In addition, there were collections of hymns, such as that compiled by Griffiths himself and entitled 'Casgliad o hymnau Wedi eu dosbarthu dan Wahanol benau. This was so popular that it went through five editions from 1855 to 1869.

Other publications also dealt with subjects which would have had a particular appeal to a Nonconformist readership. There were works on Nonconformist history and geography, often with a local flavour. Thus, there were the writings of Rev Hopkin Bevan (d.1839) including his history of the Calvinistic Methodists in the Swansea area which appeared in 1838, followed by his autobiography 'Ychydig hanes bywyd y Parch.Hopkin Bevan' which appeared in 1840. Griffiths also published works by John Davies, minister of Mynyddbach Independent church (1840-54). Apart from 'Y Lloffyn Addfed, which was a history of the Independent churches in the Swansea area, Davies also produced works as tributes to individuals who had been faithful members of their chapel congregations. One such was Hanes Bywyd a marwolaeth Mr David Roberts Treforris Yr hwn a fu yn aelod ffyddlon yn Eglwys Crist Mynyddbach, which was published in 1844. This had been preceded

in the previous year by a marwnad [elegy] 'ar farwolaeth David Rees Cefn Cadle, a deacon at Davies' church.

Apart from these publications which dealt in one way or another with religious themes, there were also handbooks on Welsh grammar and even an Anglo-Welsh dictionary which was compiled by the publisher himself. Interestingly, Griffiths did not feel the need to produce more than a small amount of English language material.

Griffiths' publications also included works by local people who did not belong to the emerging 'ministerial class' of society. There was the collection of 65 hymns compiled by Enoch Rees of Pentre Estyll and published in 1864. Then there were the poems written by John Jones, also of Pentre Estyll during the same period. Such writings, even if they were of dubious literary merit, at least serve to illustrate the interest and capabilities of local Nonconformists during and immediately after the period which witnessed the Welsh Education Reports of 1846-7.

On the whole, Griffiths' publications 'illustrate the striving for self education and self improvement of the Welsh working class, and their deep interest in religious doctrine.' It is noticeable that Griffiths' output excluded almost entirely any secular works. In particular what is missing is anything dealing with the profound economic and social changes of the period, which the local area, especially, was experiencing.

The publications which passed through Griffiths' bookshop give some indication of the interests of those who attended in ever increasing numbers the chapels which were appearing in and around Swansea, Another such indicator was the chapel lecture which was becoming increasingly popular from the 1840s. Lectures had the virtue of not demanding a degree of literacy on the part of those to whom they were directed, they were easy to organise and were a useful source of income both for individual ministers and the movement as a whole.

Lectures covered a wide range of topics,. Inevitably, Biblical themes were especially popular; in this way the lecture was simply fulfilling the basic purpose of the chapel. Thus in November 1855, the subject of the lecture given at Dinas Noddfa Baptist chapel, Landore was 'Herod the Great and his times' which was delivered by Mr Rowlands of Cwmafan.[102] The speaker was obviously something of an authority on this topic since he contributed a series of articles on it in Seren Gomer in the same year. A Mr Hughes of Liverpool chose a topic from the Old Testament when he spoke on 'the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan' at Bethesda Baptist chapel, Swansea in 1858.[103]

Other subjects were also such as could be expected given the circumstances. At York Place Baptist chapel in January 1856, Rev J H Hill gave a lecture entitled 'The Providence of Man and the Providence of God contrasted', which was the second in a series of lectures on what The Cambrian described as 'interesting Scripture

topics'.[104] The title of the lecture delivered at Dinas Noddfa in September 1854 by a Mr Morgan was 'arwyddion yr amserau mewn cysylltiad a llwyddiant yr Efengyl'. [Signs of the times in connection with the success of the Gospels.][105] Temperance was another favourite; it was the subject of the lecture delivered at Castle Street Independent chapel, Swansea, in February 1850[106] and also at the nearby Ebenezer Independent chapel during the next month.[107] Then, again, there was the history of Welsh Nonconformity; in 1855 the minister of Seion Welsh Baptist chapel, Morriston, gave a two hour lecture on Christmas Evans, for which he was rewarded by the money raised from the sale of the entry tickets.[108]

However, apart from these fairly obvious themes, many lectures dealt with contemporary events and problems in the world outside the chapels. At Libanus Independent chapel, Morriston, the subject of the lecture presented in October 1851 by its new minister, Rev Thomas Jones, was 'The Great Exhibition'.[109] In 1853, Rev Daniel Davies spoke at Dinas Noddfa Baptist church on the subject of slavery in the United States when he gave a lecture entitled 'Uncle Tom's Cabin: slavery in the United States'. Such was the quality of this lecture that the minister of Dinas Noddfa stated that the entry fee should have been doubled from sixpence to one shilling.[110] International events were favourite topics. On 31 March 1855 the well known Baptist minister Dr Thomas Price of Aberdare gave a lecture at Seion Baptist chapel, Morriston on

the very topical issue of the Crimean War ('Y Rhyfel yn y Dwyrain'). Rev Watkin, minister of Seion was most impressed:

> Darlith benigamp, yn llawn diddordeb, ffraethineb, a synwyr.[111]
>
> [Brilliant lecture, full of interest, wit, and sense.]

And well he might be, since Dr Price was one of the most popular and able figures on the Nonconformist circuit, with a particular interest in contemporary events in the wider world.[112] At the same chapel, a few years later in 1864, the missionary Thomas Evans spoke on the Indian Mutiny.[113] Presumably, this was the same Thomas Evans who in 1896 gave a lecture, again on the same subject, to Bethesda Welsh Baptist church in Swansea.[114]

Then there were those lectures which dealt with miscellaneous matters, from the informative to the serious and even the lighthearted. At the Huntingdon Chapel in Swansea, the talk given in November 1843 was the far from frivolous subject of chapel fund raising.[115] At Seion, Morriston, Rev Evan Thomas gave a talk on 12 April 1856 entitled 'Y modd i iawn dreulio oriau hamddenol' [the correct way to spend leisure hours].[116] At the same chapel on 29 January 1870, no less a person than Dr Spinther James, who happened to be the brother of the minister gave a talk entitled 'Drych i ddyn i adnabod ei gymydog' [a mirror for man to recognise his neighbour]. This discussed the relationship between facial appearance and the human personality [Gwynebyddiaeth], and phrenology [penyddiaeth], which was somewhat different from what was normally heard at such events.[117] Then, a few years later,

in April 1875, Rev William James of Bristol gave a talk on Palestine at the Unitarian church, Swansea.[118] The geographical theme was also present at Salim English Baptist Church, Landore, in October 1890 where 'brother Abraham Evans' offered to speak on Africa and 'my life among different tribes.'[119]

Most of the illustrations supplied relate to the Welsh language chapels. This, however is to be expected since such chapels were for long in the majority in the industrial communities in the Swansea area. Those illustrations relating to the English language chapels suggest, however, that there was little appreciable difference between English and Welsh language chapels with regard to this activity.

The subject matter of these lectures is deserving of particular attention. It is salutary to recall that most of those who would have listened to such events in the industrial districts of the locality were working class people of little formal education. Indeed, this would have been true, to some extent, of some of those who delivered such talks. Given such considerations, it is difficult not to be impressed. The content of the lectures shows the interest which many local people had in events and issues which were outside their own experiences. However, what is missing from these activities is any reference to the problems which existed in local society itself. Possibly, it was felt that the grubby world of industry should not be permitted to intrude beyond the vestry doors, or that such matters did not belong in

chapel surroundings. It would seem to indicate, however, that the chapels kept the problems of the industrial society at arm's length.

An activity which demanded a higher degree of personal participation was the literary society. The term appears to have been used rather loosely to describe those societies which were engaged in a range of non-musical activities. At Siloh, Landore, inevitably, a literary society was in existence soon after the church was founded in 1829.[120] Similar activities were also part of the cultural life of Carmel Calvinistic Methodist church, Pentredŵr (1851), which were said to be of benefit to the area ['Yn llesoli yr ardal'].[121] The Calvinistic Methodists at Trinity, Swansea, formed their literary society on 20 October 1861.[122] It was decided that meetings were to be held every Monday after the usual prayer meeting. The subjects to be dealt with on such occasions were to include geography and travel, but that controversial issues ['pynciau dadleuol'] were to be avoided. It would appear that the Trinity society was as much a debating club as it was a literary society.

These activities belong to the formative period in the history of local Nonconformity. Not surprisingly, there were improvements both in the quality and quantity of what took place as time went by. At the start of the twentieth century, activities associated with the Guild, or Cultural Society at Morriston Tabernacle church were especially impressive.[123] Meetings were held on one

evening per week, usually during the winter months. The activities during these occasions included discussions, debates, or lectures on a wide range of subjects including politics and labour issues in addition to the usual religion and culture. On one occasion the question debated was 'Ai cyfalaf ynte Llafur yw y cyfrwng gwerthfawrocaf i Gynhyrchiad?' [Is capital or labour the most encouraging medium for productivity?]

On another occasion, the question debated was 'Pa un fyddai fwyaf manteisiol i Gymru - Ymreolaeth neu Adran Gymreig?' [Which would be of the greatest advantage to Wales - self government or a Welsh Department?] The society conducted its activities usually in Welsh although English was not excluded entirely.

Some indication of the quality of these meetings can be gauged from the fact that guest speakers included some of the most distinguished figures in contemporary Welsh society, such as Sir John Williams, Sir D Brynmor Jones and the barrister and historian W Llywelyn Williams. Then there was Professor Thomas Levi, who gave an address entitled 'Ffydd y Bobl' (The People's Faith.] Equally well known, at least in Welsh Nonconformist circles was Ben Davies, Panteg, who spoke on 'Ann Griffiths', and 'Caneuon Cymru'. Meeetings were also attended by a whole galaxy of well known local figures, as well as members of the congregation itself.

The society also devoted attention to literary matters both English and Welsh. Alongside 'Noson gyda'r Beirdd [An evening with the Welsh poets] was the equivalent 'An evening with English poets'. Shakespeare was given separate treatment, 'with readings and recitals'. It could, in truth be stated that those who participated in, or who attended the meetings of the Tabernacle Society were acquiring a very good liberal education.

However, perhaps the most characteristic cultural activity linked with the Swansea chapels was music, especially singing. In his diary for 15 October 1820, David Davies referred to a 'singing school' at Morriston.[124] Some years later the account book of Ebenezer Independent church also contained references to singing.

18th August 1842	Pd for teaching singers	£1.1.0d
21 December 1842	Cash for singers	5.4d[125]

The increasing importance attached to music led to the emergence of the chapel choir, initially as a means to improving the quality of congregational singing. Chapel choirs became more numerous from the middle of the century. Soon after the foundation of Babell Calvinistic Methodist church at Cwmbwrla in 1851, the younger members of the congregation formed a choir.[126] Likewise, when Owen Owen was inducted as minister at Seion Baptist church in Morriston in 1857, the congregation already possessed a small but thriving choir.[127] At the same time, new techniques of music learning were devised which contributed much to a raising of standards. The John Hullah system of sight reading was brought

to Swansea before 1850, but within a few years it had been overshadowed by John Curwen's tonic sol-fa which became enormously popular. During the second half of the century, the teaching of singing techniques became a key part of the Sunday school curriculum. In 1871 all the Sunday schools belonging to Libanus Independent church in Morriston were learning sol-fa, which doubtless helped to explain why its choir was becoming 'one of the foremost of all the choirs of Wales'.[128]

The increasing stress on singing heightened the need for improved instrumental accompaniment. For some years, organs were found only in certain of the town centre chapels. These included the Wesleyan Chapel in Goat Street, the Unitarian Chapel in High Street, and the Huntingdon Chapel in the Burrows each of which would have attracted some of the more affluent of the local citizens.[129] In the other chapels, the harmonium proved a popular alternative for many years. Thus, in 1857, Seion Baptist Chapel, Morriston was equipped with a harmonium which cost twenty seven guineas.[130]. However, toward the close of the century, organs were installed in an increasing number of chapels. In 1892, the new organ at New Siloh, Landore, cost the considerable sum of £466.1.5.[131] This figure paled somewhat in comparison with the £1000 which the congregation of Ebenezer Independent Church, Swansea, paid when their new organ was purchased in 1904.[132] By the time of the Welsh Church Commission in 1906, most of the bigger chapels in the district had organs.[133] Still, here and there other less orthodox means of accompaniment

were used, such as at Salim Baptist Chapel, Landore, where there was an orchestra for a number of years until the start of the twentieth century when it was replaced by a new organ.[134]

The presence of these musical facilities led to the chapel concert which, in addition to its value as a cultural event was also a useful source of funds during a period of intense chapel building. Concerts brought participants and audiences into contact with native-born composers as well as the great European masters. Thus, works such as Handel's 'Messiah' and Haydn's 'Creation' became the staple repertoire of the chapel choir. In this way, the experiences of people leading what were in other ways drab and humdrum lives were immensely enriched and made more worthwhile.

The large chapels which existed in the area were particularly well suited to promoting this musical culture. Moreover, the standard achieved could be considerable. At Ebenezer Independent church, in central Swansea, the organist and choir master from 1881 until 1889 was no less a person than Joseph Parry, probably the foremost Welsh musician of his day.[135] Then, at Siloh Independent chapel, situated in the heart of Swansea's 'Black Country' at Landore, there was a strong emphasis on music from the beginning. It was encouraged initially by William Morris who was minister from 1839 until 1847,[136] so that by the middle of the century Siloh had already acquired a high reputation for the quality of its music. One contemporary described the congregation 'yn rhagori yn ei haelioni crefyddol ac yn ei dull trefnus a gweddaidd

o ganu mawl ar y rhan amlaf o eglwysi yr enwad yn yr ardal'.[137] [excelled in its religious generosity and in its ordered and graceful style of singing praise, over and above the majority of churches of that denomination in the area]. Musical tuition was an important part of the life of the chapel, and was reflected in the quality of its choirs. For some years, the choir was under the direction of one of the members named John Jones ('ap Caradog') under whom it performed many of the well known works of the great composers, not excluding those from the Roman Catholic tradition, such as Mozart's Twelfth Mass.

One of the few chapels in the Swansea area which challenged Siloh in the quality and extent of its musical achievement was Tabernacle, Morriston.[138] A strong musical tradition inherited from Libanus, its predecessor, was maintained and encouraged at Tabernacle by the long serving minister, W Emlyn Jones (1874-1914), who was in his element in the cymanfa ganu. In addition to its minister, the chapel also benefited from the influence of a series of energetic and able individuals who served as organist and choirmaster. The first of these was David Francis, who came from Merthyr Tydfil, initially to become organist and choirmaster at Libanus, and then at Tabernacle where he remained until 1889. The chapel enjoyed probably its 'golden era' in musical terms, during the time of W Penfro Rowlands, who served in a similar capacity from 1892 till 1919. Rowlands was the composer of the famous hymn tune Blaenwern, named after the Pembrokeshire farm from which he orginated. Interestingly, both

Siloh, Landore and Tabernacle, Morriston belonged to the same denomination, namely the Independents. The musical pre-eminence which the two chapels enjoyed was probably helped by their sheer size, which meant that they could offer bigger and better facilities and thus attract talented musicians. Before taking up his duties at Tabernacle, W Penfro Rowlands had been engaged in a similar capacity at the nearby Bethania Calvinistic Methodist chapel.

The relationship between the chapels and the eisteddod was an illustration of their increasing importance as agencies for the promotion and transmission of certain types of popular cultural as well as being a means by which they could fulfil this role. During the course of the nineteenth century, the chapels virtually enveloped the eisteddfod, which acquired an aura of respectability which it had not previously possessed. Indeed the relationship with the eisteddfod was initially frowned upon by some Nonconformists, especially the Calvinistic Methodists by whom it was seen as part of the old lax irreligious irreverent culture of the past. However, it gradually became apparent that the eisteddfod possessed distinct possibilities. It was seen to be based on those principles of competitiveness and of individual participation which were so characteristic of the industrial society of the period. It was, moreover, a means of demonstrating literary and musical ability of those who had not received a college or university education and thus had an added appeal for many ministers. It was, finally, a way of pushing Nonconformist

ideas about moral conduct. The eisteddfod thus became a useful instrument in the hands of the Nonconformists.

In the local area, the eisteddfod became a popular feature of chapel life from the middle of the nineteenth century. In Morriston, an eisteddfod was held in September 1854,[139] but its relationship with the local chapels is uncertain although it was attended by Rev John Jones ('Mathetes') of Caersalem Newydd 'o dan y llawryf' [under the laurels'][140]. Jones was to be an avid participant in eisteddfodau in the various districts of South Wales where he served as minister. It was for this Morriston eisteddfod that John Jones of Pentre Estyll wrote his poem praising the Vivians for their efforts in establishing their copperworks school.[141] A few years later in 1859, an 'eisteddfod adroddiadol ['recitation eisteddfod'] was held at Seion chapel in Morriston on Christmas Eve, which became a favourite time for holding such events. This eisteddfod included a mixture of singing and reciting. The newly formed chapel choir also performed a number of items, which brought tears to the eyes of many listeners according to the report which was printed in Seren Gomer[142].

Elsewhere in the district, Samlet Williams states that the first eisteddfod which he could recall in Llansamlet was held at Adulam Baptist chapel during the pastorate of Philip Morgan (1859-62). This event which was actually held in the chapel graveyard scandalized the members of the nearby Salem Capel y Cwm:

> A rhyfedd fel yr edrychai y saint yng nghapel y Cwm ar y peth fel peth pechadurus iawn, fel pe buasai bodau anwn i gael eu gollwng yn rhydd i ddyfod yno'.[143]
>
> [It is strange how the saints in Capel y Cwm considered the event as a very sinful thing as if the inhabitants of hell had been let free to come there.]

The coming of the National Eisteddfod in Swansea in 1863 doubtless boosted the popularity of such events in the district. Thus at Siloh, Landore, an eisteddfod was held at Christmas 1863.[144] From the 1870s, an eisteddfod became an annual event at Tabernacle, Morriston, which became one of the most prestigious in the entire area.[145] During the early years of the twentieth century many chapels were holding their own eisteddfodau.

In addition, chapel parties also competed in eisteddfodau which were held elsewhere. Thus the choir of Morriston Tabernacle successfully competed in the Merthyr Eisteddfod of 1881.[146] Not to be outdone, the male voice choir of Siloh, Landore won their competition at the Caernarfon National Eisteddfod in 1894.[147]

The holding of eisteddfodau was not confined to the Welsh language chapels. The English Baptist churches of Salim and Danygraig both held eisteddfodau during the closing years of the century. Indeed, in 1905, the juvenile choir of Tabernacle English Baptist Church, Carmarthen Road, was the prize winner in the National Eisteddfod.[148] The involvement of these English language churches was possibly made easier by the fact that the eisteddfod, at a national and at a local level, was not an all-Welsh event.

The volumes of evidence compiled by the Welsh Church Commission in the early years of the twentieth century reveal in exceptional detail the extent to which the local Nonconformist churches sought to provide for the cultural needs of the communities in which they were situated.[149] As might be expected, the most popular activity was music. Out of 107 Nonconformist churches within the borough, sixty seven had at least one choir, whilst in a handful of cases there was more than one.[150] Their activities were facilitated by the organs which were found in the majority of chapels by that time. Between 1900 and 1905, most of these choirs had been actively engaged in performing sacred works of various kinds. The Independents were particularly prominent in this respect. During these years the choir of Ebenezer, Swansea, had performed 'Messiah', 'Light of the World', 'Judith', and 'St Paul'. Walter Road, another town centre church, had presented three concerts of sacred music in the same year. Siloh, Landore, had been equally active, having performed 'Samson', 'Elijah', 'Gate of Life' and 'Stabat Mater'. Tabernacle, Morriston, was in the same league, with performances of 'Hymn of Praise', 'Stabat Mater', 'Messiah', 'Acis and Galatea' and 'Hiawatha'. The Baptists could also point to a considerable record of musical achievement, especially Mount Calvary, Danygraig, which had produced 'Three annually' of such works between 1900 and 1905. The Wesleyans, possibly drawing from a different cultural tradition appeared to devote less energy to such matters, to judge by the number of concerts which they had produced in the five years before the Commission began its work.

If music enjoyed the highest profile, there were many other cultural activities within the local chapels. In some cases, there were literary societies and lantern lectures, as existed at Dinas Noddfa Welsh Baptist church, Landore, and the Gorse Road Mission, respectively. Apart from those devoted to Bible study, a handful of chapels had classes which studied less usual subjects. Thus, at Soar Independent chapel, in the rapidly anglicising Greenhill area, there was a weekly Welsh grammar class. The Unitarian chapel in High Street, perhaps in keeping with its traditions, held classes to study philosophy and 'languages'. Throughout the chapels there were clubs and societies which catered for various age groups and interests, often linked with the temperance principle. For children and young persons, the Band of Hope was the most common, supplemented here and there by the Boys' Brigade and youth guilds. Brunswick Wesleyan Methodist church was particularly enterprising in that it arranged a variety of outdoor recreational activities for the younger members of its congregation. These included rambles and cycle rides, along with tennis, cricket and football clubs. Some chapels also had organisations catering specifically for women, although these were less common.

Whatever else the Nonconformist churches of Swansea did or did not do, there can be little doubt that they contributed much to the education and culture of the communities in which they were situated during their period of growth in the nineteenth century. Perhaps, in these respects they were too active. As the century

drew to its close, it was feared that such activities were obscuring the basic spiritual role of the chapels; the concert was becoming more popular than the prayer meeting.[151] The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, more so than the other leading deonominations, had always been especially sensitive to this danger. It was little wonder, then, that in 1880, Rev William Williams, a leading figure within the denonination in Swansea should have expressed misgivings about what was taking place.[152] The chapels, he claimed, were in danger of becoming playhouses [chwareudai] rather than places of worship.

> Nid oes ynddynt nemor o foliannu yn awr fel y bu unwaith, ond y mae ynddynt lawer iawn fwy o chwerthin.[152]
>
> [There is not much praising in them now as there once was, but there is very much more laughing.]

The very activities against which the Methodists had campaigned in the past were now threatening to reappear, albeit in a more sophisticated form.

This created a particular dilemma for local Noncoformity, which existed in a society where other attractions were becoming increasingly available. Abandonment of interest in the eisteddfod, and the concert, might serve to reinforce the basic role of the chapel: it might also mean that their popularity would suffer. By and large, the Swansea chapels preferred to avoid any radical change of policy in such matters. The uneasiness which this caused might help to explain why the Revival of 1904-5 was to emerge with such vigour in the locality.

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CHAPTER 5

NONCONFORMITY AND THE INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

The industrial society has sometimes been seen as presenting a formidable challenge to the power and influence of organised religion. However, its emergence in nineteenth century Swansea was accompanied by a remarkable upsurge in religious feeling, to the extent that this can be measured by increasing attendances at places of worship. This trend was not experienced by organised religion as a whole, but instead the main beneficiaries were those groups which dissented from the Established Church. As a result, what had previously appealed to only a minority had by the middle of the century captured the allegiance of the majority of worshippers within the locality. Nonconformist historians were later to attribute this transformation to the particular strengths of their movement, allied to the weaknesses of the Established Church. However, such explanations tend to be confined to examining the evangelical activities of Nonconformity; in reality, the appeal of the movement was more complex. Therefore, it is necessary to enlarge upon the traditional explanation in order to take account of this situation. This chapter will therefore consider the success of Nonconformity in nineteenth century Swansea against the background of contemporary society, to uncover its relationship with that society.

Fundamental to this discussion is the fact that the industrialisation of Swansea created a new kind of society. Not

only were there changes in living and working conditions, but in the new industrial society many traditional assumptions and constraints no longer applied. Under these circumstances, those who had benefited from the previous situation now stood to lose most. In terms of organised religion, this was the Established Church which was now placed in a more vulnerable position. In the industrial society, the Church could no longer look to the landowner, that doughty supporter of established religion. It is true that some Swansea industrialists, such as the Morrises, the Vivians, the Grenfells and the Smiths were members of the Established Church, and that it benefited very tangibly from their support. However, such people were also very supportive of the other forms of organised religion, as this chapter will reveal. Thus, stripped of much of the help which it had been able to take for granted in the past, the Church was thrown back onto its own resources in a time of change and turmoil. In a limited, but very important sense, the Church, at least in the industrial communities, was in a position not entirely dissimilar from that of non-established religion, whose existence had always depended upon the self-help principle. Thus, the industrial society presented new problems for the Established Church, but new advantages for the remainder of organised religion.

Another characteristic of the industrial society was that it produced new and rapidly expanding communities. To cope with this new situation, it was necessary for organised religion to demonstrate a considerable degree of flexibility. However, this

varied within the movement as a whole. The changes were especially to the disadvantage of the Established Church, almost inevitably. It was not simply complacency and neglect which prevented the Church from responding quickly and positively to changing circumstances; the barriers were of a more deep-seated nature. Apart from severe cash problems, the Church was encumbered with an inappropriate pastoral structure, and with complex procedures which seemed almost to have been devised to maintain the status quo. The ancient parish churches of the Swansea area were too few and far away from the developing industrial communities such as Morriston and Landore, and Pentrechwyth. Nevertheless, the subdivision of these large, sprawling parishes was impossible until the nineteenth century was well advanced. The whole system was buttressed by powerful vested interests. Even the foundation of an additional place of worship in an existing parish was no easy undertaking since it required the consent of those likely to be affected, such as the incumbent and his patron.

As a result, the most obvious symptom of the failure of the Church to cope with the new situation developing in the locality was its failure to provide new places of worship. In addition, when it is noted that the only two new Anglican places of worship founded in the industrial communities within the district were the work of industrialists rather than of the Church itself, these failings are still further underlined. The St John's chapel of ease, was founded in 1789 in the new township of Morriston through the

efforts of Sir John Morris.[1] Likewise, All Saints' Kilvey, which appeared in 1842, was established by Riversdale Grenfell,[2] member of the staunch Anglican family domiciled in the area. Trinity Church, founded almost immediately afterwards was another welcome addition, but its location in central Swansea meant that it was too far away to serve the industrial communities which were to the east and north of the town.[3] Of greater value in this respect was the reconstruction of the old and dilapidated St John's Church on the northern outskirts of the town, which was carried out in 1824.[4] These improvements, however, fell far short of what was required.

The improvements in provision for worship made by the Anglicans were, indeed, paltry when placed beside the achievements of the Nonconformists who by 1851 possessed forty four places of worship in the district as a whole, all but nine of which had been founded since 1800.[5] Moreover, this figure excludes those causes which were short-lived, or which had so shadowy an existence that they did not appear in the Religious Census of 1851.

Without much effort and self-sacrifice, these achievements would have been impossible; the Nonconformists, too, faced their problems. Nevertheless this process was greatly aided by the nature of Nonconformity itself, which was in many ways admirably constituted to respond to the new situation. Free of the constraints which hampered the Established Church, and lacking any form of central control, Nonconformists were able to found their

causes and build their chapels and schoolrooms in accordance with prevailing needs as they understood them. There was, too, the added benefit that as local people, by residence if not by birth, they were likely to be particularly sensitive to such needs.

Moreover, even theology played its part because the indifference displayed by the earlier generations of Nonconformists to the physical appearance of their places of worship also helped to ensure that meetings could be held wherever the need arose and with the minimum delay. Unlike the Established Church, the Nonconformists had no qualms about using the most unprepossessing places. Reference has already been made to the congregation of Baptists who met in a colliery engine house in the Plasmarl area towards the end of the eighteenth century.(6) Then, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the premises of a local smelting works, probably the Landore Copper works, was also used for a similar purpose by other local groups.(7) In Morriston, Horeb Independent Church was actually formed in 1842 by a group then meeting in the premises of the nearby Clyndu colliery.(8)

Indifference to architectural niceties also facilitated the rapid construction of Nonconformist meeting places whose very plainness meant that they could be constructed by the congregations themselves. There was also the added advantage that such self-build schemes saved on costs, no mean consideration for people who belonged to the poorer sections of society. Thus, the congregation of Horeb, Morriston built their own chapel which

measured a modest thirty one feet by thirty feet when it was officially opened in December 1845.[9] Most of the early chapels and schoolrooms in the industrial districts were in fact built in this way. Samlet Williams provides an evocative picture when he describes the local Calvinistic Methodists carrying stones for the building of a new schoolroom known as Carmel, Pentredwr, in 1851.[10] In this case there was the added bonus that Rev Ezekiel Thomas of Salem Capel y Cwm was able to offer guidance in his capacity as a professional builder. In this respect Thomas was not unique; Rev Thomas Thomas was responsible for building alterations at his own chapel at Siloh,[11] Landore, as well as the rebuilding of Bethel Independent Chapel, Llansamlet,[12] and Dinas Noddfa Baptist Chapel, Landore, in 1852 and 1870.[13]

The social basis of the new industrial communities also had important implications for organised religion. These were communities which were overwhelmingly working class, and the progress of organised religion depended on its ability to appeal to the tastes and aspirations of this social group. Here again, the Established Church was in a weak position. The coppermen, colliers, and others who comprised the industrial workforce were hardly likely to be attracted to a body which had close associations with wealth and privilege. The life style of such individuals may well have encouraged a more independent, less deferential outlook. They belonged to a different kind of society from that which the Established Church was originally intended to serve. Even the seating arrangements in the parish churches could

reflect social inequality since provision for the poorer classes seemed almost incidental. Under the system of appropriated pews, many pews belonged to, or were habitually used by well-to-do members of the community. This existed in its extreme form in St Mary's parish church, Swansea, where in 1851 the vicar stated that 120 of the 953 sittings were the property of one person, so that many parishioners were 'applicants for sittings in vain'.[14] Little wonder then, that this practice has been described as 'a potent cause of defection to the Nonconformists.[15]

The image of eighteenth century Dissent was hardly egalitarian, it must be admitted, although it is possible that the local movement was somewhat less elitist than usual. Thus, the twelve trustees of the Baptist chapel off High Street included craftsmen and yeomen farmers in 1760.[16] More important, the nature of non-established religion meant that it had the potential to reflect the social make-up of the community at large, and not simply the elites. In industrial villages and settlements, the Nonconformist chapels and meeting places were built, maintained and attended by congregations which were overwhelmingly, almost uniformly working class for much of the century. In the Nonconformist meeting places, such people were not pushed into the background, nor were they made to feel embarrassed by deficiencies of dress, speech, or education.

Moreover, in seeking to promote the spiritual well-being of the industrial society, Nonconformity presented a type of Christianity

which had much appeal for those whose lives were often made 'nasty, brutish and short' through their surroundings. Those who worked in inherently dangerous industries, who lived during times when sickness and disease were widespread, were unlikely to be impressed by an Anglican Christianity characterised by 'latitudinarian theology, muted piety and somewhat perfunctory performance of ecclesiastical duties,'[17] or the cool intellectualism of the eighteenth century Dissenters, still surviving here and there. Instead, people only too clearly aware of the vulnerability of their lives were receptive to a theology which was preoccupied with the life to come, and which seemed to offer a solid promise of salvation. This was coupled with an emotional revivalistic approach which had been largely pioneered by the Methodists in the eighteenth century and adopted by other groups such as the Baptists and Independents. There was, too, the additional advantage that such an approach was simple enough for all to understand and even to propagate; the Nonconformist services had no need of the highly educated professionals found elsewhere.

It is beyond doubt that the conditions of life of the inhabitants of the industrial communities encouraged a sense of piety. A well-known illustration of the close relationship which existed between dangerous working conditions and religion is provided by the services which were held at Mynydd Newydd colliery, midway between Treboeth and Fforestfach.[18] The origin of this practice appears to be fairly clear, despite slight differences in detail

between existing contemporary accounts in Welsh and English newspapers and journals. It appears that the frequency of accidents at the colliery which had opened in 1843 persuaded some of the colliers to begin holding weekly prayer meetings. These commenced in 1845, according to a report in The Cambrian in August 1846, which referred to 'a public meeting at Mynydd Newydd Colliery to encourage the persons employed in the works to persevere in the praiseworthy conduct which they have pursued for the past twelve months of assembling in the coalpit on every Monday morning to pray for divine protection during the week.'[19]

In time, the Mynydd Newydd services became something of a local institution, and were held in a room situated in the underground workings. Soon after their inception, the weekly services gave rise to special annual services. These were held initially at the colliery, but were later removed to local chapels, such as Philadelphia Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Morriston where they took place in 1851.[20]

Although the best known, the Mynydd Newydd services were not unique; The Cambrian for September 1871 records similar services at the nearby Pentre Colliery, although there they were conducted by a local Anglican clergyman:

> The Rev.D.Owen Thomas, curate of Hafod St John's.....held prayers underground at Pentre Pit.....at 6a.m. on Monday last.[22]

A later source states that the Pentre services were held on waste ground near the pithead and that they continued until the last few

years of the century.[23] A weekly prayer meeting is also said to have been held at the Cwmfelin tinplate works when it was under the management of Lord Glantawe during the years from 1883 to 1896.[24]

The nature of life in the emerging industrial communities may also have contributed to revivals, those most dramatic expressions of popular religious feeling. Other views notwithstanding, the revival can be seen as a symptom of the anxiety and insecurity felt by those whose lives were being overwhelmed by circumstances. A significant feature of these powerful movements is that they were confined to the poorer, most vulnerable classes. In the Swansea area, it was the working class industrial districts that were most susceptible to such occurrences, rather than in the town itself, where there was a greater social diversity. Thus, the information available suggests that the revivals of 1807 and 1828 were felt especially in the industrial districts of Morriston and Llansamlet.[25]

Revivals also tended to occur during times of social crisis, when prevailing fears reached a new intensity. This appears to apply especially to the cholera epidemics which took place during the middle period of the century, and which created 'a psychology of terror' in the population.[26] Thus, the cholera epidemic of 1849 coincided with a noticeable revival. Religious leaders as a whole argued that cholera was divinely inspired to remind people of their mortality and of the need to act accordingly. Thomas Rees

stated that the 1849 epidemic was 'principally the means of arousing the attention of our hearers,' and that it was obviously sent from God for this purpose.[27] On the other hand,the 1832 epidemic did not lead to a revival in the Swansea area, although elsewhere powerful events of this nature took place. A possible explanation may be that the 1832 epidemic took place mainly in the town itself, rather than in the outlying areas where people were more likely to express their feelings in revivals. By 1849 creeping urbanisation meant that even these districts were likely to experience cholera epidemics. There is little to suggest, however, that the 1828 revival was the product of social tension. It cannot be conclusively stated that revivals were caused entirely by social conditions, but such considerations appear to be part of the explanation.

Class structure was a crucial factor in the spread of ~Nonconformity in the industrial communities of the locality; so too, was language. Whatever may be the case elsewhere, it would be incorrect to claim that the Established Church locally paid little heed to the needs of Welsh speakers. It is true that at St Mary's parish church in Swansea, the services were held only in English at the start of the nineteenth century, and had been so for many years,[28] but in compensation, Welsh was used at the nearby St John's.[29] It is interesting to note that The Cambrian stated that part of the reason for the rebuilding of St John's in 1824 was to cope with 'the great influx of Welsh speakers into the town.'[30] Indeed, the congregation of St John's was the largest

purely Welsh congregation in the entire St David's diocese.[31] In the other parish churches of the district, provision for worship in the Welsh language existed to varying degrees. Those who petitioned for a new Anglican place of worship in Morriston in 1789 claimed that such provision was necessary for the English speakers of the district since the services at the parish church were entirely in Welsh.

> Moreover, such services [at Llangyfelach] being usually performed in the Welsh language and the same being in great measure if not wholly unintelligible to the inhabitants of Morriston who are more accustomed to the English language.[32]

It may well be that the true inspiration behind this request came from Sir John Morris, rather than the linguistic needs of the local population. In fact, in 1799 the parish church was holding services in English in the morning and in Welsh in the afternoon. On the opposite side of the valley at the start of the century services were held in Welsh at Llansamlet parish church.[33]

Nevertheless, the provision made for Welsh speakers in the locality by the Established Church was inferior to that of the Nonconformists. In addition the gap tended to widen as the amount of Welsh used in local church services diminished, even in those parts of the district where it was widely used. However, as a populist movement, Nonconformity made use of the language of the local community as a matter of course. This meant that most of the earlier chapels in the industrial districts carried out their activities through the medium of Welsh. The linguistic approach

adapted by such chapels could however, be more ambiguous in certain circumstances. In those areas where English was increasing, the Welsh chapels were prepared to make some provision, especially in their Sunday schools. As the linguistic balance tipped towards English in many districts, this was reflected in the appearance of English language chapels. This serves to underline the principle that the Nonconformists were better able to cope with the requirements of the local community than the Established Church.

The presence of large numbers of incomers was an aspect of the local industrial community which also deserves much consideration for its religious significance. The issue was influenced by their origins, and their religious beliefs, which were often interrelated. For much of the nineteenth century, the majority of those who settled in Swansea came from other parts of Wales, especially the rural districts to the west and north. Many of the newcomers were already imbued with strong religious convictions, in most cases of the Nonconformist kind. What is especially important, however, is that they retained their religious sympathies in their new homes, and they played an active part in the local chapel movement. One such individual was William Powell a native of Trecastle, Breconshire.[34] Powell settled at Cnap Llwyd, above Morriston, and was for a time a member of the Calvinistic Methodist congregation at Capel y Cwm, Llansamlet which he later left and espoused Sandemanianism. Presumably, he was the 'Mr W. Powell' mentioned by Joshua Thomas as being

involved with the 'Engine' chapel at Plasmarl.[35] Then there was John Thomas, who came from Pembrokeshire in Llansamlet. He and his family were instrumental [sylfaenwyr yr achos] in the foundation of Adulam Baptist Church in 1848 in the Bonymaen locality of Llansamlet parish.[36] Similarly, two of the stalwarts at Tabernacle Calvinistic Methodist church, Landore, were Ebenezer Morris, who was raised at Woodstock, Pembrokeshire, and John Jones, a native of Llanpumpsaint, Carmarthenshire.[37]

Indeed, some historians have argued that the triumph of Nonconformity in the industrial communities of Wales was caused by the movement of population from the rural areas where it originated. Religion, or rather, Nonconformist religion, was part of the traditional rural culture which people sought to preserve in the new and not always rewarding surroundings of the industrial society. Revivals were 'symbolic of the process of adaptation from a rural to an industrial society.'[37] The retention of this part, at least, of the old way of life was helped by the relatively small size of the industrial settlements in Wales which were more like industrial villages than large, sprawling towns, and where a sense of community could be more easily created.

This is an argument which may be easier to sustain in relation to the communities in the central and eastern sections of the coalfield, which were largely created by the movement of population from the rural districts surrounding. The situation in Swansea was rather different. The new industrial communities

which developed around the old town were not created by the influx of outsiders to the extent that took place elsewhere. Moreover, the Klondike-like movement experienced by other areas did not take place in the Swansea area; certainly not during that crucial formative period before 1850. There was,too, a long tradition of religion outside the Established Church. Nonconformist historians, such as Thomas Rees, argued that the Dissent of the previous century had appealed only to a fraction of the population, and certainly not to the classes which comprised the bulk of the population. It was stated that even at the end of the eighteenth century, the people living in the upper town district of Swansea were quite irreligious.[39]

> Peth anghyffredin iawn gynt yn yr ardaloedd hyn fyddai cael gweithwyr yn proffesu eu crefydd.
>
> [Previously it would have been a very unusual thing to find workers professing their religion].

Most places of worship in the town were attended by farmers and businessmen rather than the working classes who were 'yn [sic] meddiant y diafol' [possessed by the devil].[40] Indeed, it was alleged that the miners and other workers in the town were 'yn debycach i farbariad nag i breswylwyr gwlad wareiddiedig' [were more like barbarians than the inhabitants of a cultured country].[41] The inhabitants of the outlying districts were similarly described, with drunkenness, cock fighting and other disreputable pastimes being common.

Such remarks must, however, be judged by their origins. The same writers would have made critical comments about social habits

prevailing several generations later. Such comments, too, ignore the expansion taking place in the later decades of the eighteenth century amongst these religious movements which existed outside the Established Church. Nor was this expansion affecting the social elites only, the traditional clients of Dissent. Certainly, Mynyddbach Independent Church was recruiting industrial workers into membership since at least the 1770s as the following entries from the church book show:

i) William David, a young man working at the copper works was admitted September 26 1774.[42]

ii) Hopkin, the son of John Jenkins copperman was baptised at Morris Castle April 14, 1780.[43]

Likewise, it is difficult to accept that the congregation of Calvinistic Methodists meeting at Capel y Cwm, in Llansamlet parish since 1742 was not composed of anybody except colliers and other workmen employed in local smelting works. The evidence also suggests that these incomers who played an active part in chapel life were outnumbered by others who had been domiciled in the locality for some considerable time, at least. Amongst the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, one of the founders of the movement in Llansamlet was John Richards, who was probably a native of the district.[44] Then there were the Rossers, John and Luce, whose farm at Wig Uchaf, a short distance beyond the town in a north westerly direction, was used by a mixed congregation of Dissenters before 1776[45]. David Thomas, who was largely responsible for the establishment in 1799 of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist

church at Crug Glas on the outskirts of Swansea, was a native of Llansamlet.[46]

In addition, not all who came into the area from the surrounding countryside were people of deep religious convictions. In 1799, the church wardens of Swansea parish referred to the large numbers of people in the town, many of whom were 'irreligious, debauched and profane.'[47] It is, therefore, incorrect to picture the growth of Nonconformity in nineteenth century industrial Swansea as being simply the result of the influx into the district of people who were already devout converts, and whose attitudes were in contrast to those born in the area. What is true is that this large-scale movement reinforced a trend which was already taking place.

One particular feature of Nonconformity in the Swansea area which has already been described was diversity. In this respect, Swansea's Nonconformity contrasted with the movement in other parts of Wales. The reason this situation was different in Swansea was because of the nature of migration into the district. Although for long dominated by movement from within Wales, Swansea increasingly attracted poeple from further afield. Some of these incomers introduced new forms of Nonconformity into the area; others were able to strengthen existing denominations. The strong Cornish connection was of considerable assurance to Wesleyan Methodism. Thus, the Stricks were originally a Cornish family involved in the fruit and vegetable trade with Swansea. Members

of the family eventually settled in Swansea where they attended the Wesleyan chapel.[48] Another prominent family at the same chapel were the Goldsworthys. William Goldsworthy, who was born in Cornwall in 1821 settled in Swansea where he established a business as a baker and flour seller.[49]

A twist in this theme is provided by the history of the Morgan family.[50] Thomas Morgan, a Swansea copper worker was sent for a period to Cornwall by his employers. Whilst there, he became a Methodist before returning with a Cornish wife to his home town in 1815. His son, William, became manager of the Hafod copperworks and was a prominent member of the congregation at the Wesley chapel, where he played a key role when it was rebuilt in 1845. A contemporary was Thomas Evans, a native of Anglesey but who, like the elder Morgan, took a Cornish wife and established himself in business as a chemist in High Street.[51] Both these cases, incidentally, probably illustrate the influence of marriage upon denominational allegiances.

Evangelical Nonconformity was able to meet the spiritual needs of the industrial communities of the locality to a greater extent than its chief rival, the Established Church. However, while Nonconformity was always preoccupied with spiritual objectives, its role within such communities was much wider. Swansea's industrial communities, too, possessed something of the character of frontier settlements, even if not to the same extent as elsewhere in South Wales. Thus, even in the Swansea area,

Nonconformity owed its popularity to the social functions which it fulfilled, as well as to the spiritual succour which it provided. Unconsciously, the movement helped blend new, raw settlements into genuine communities. At the very least, the chapels were alternatives to the public houses as places where people could meet and form social relationships. Then there were the social events such as tea meetings and Sunday school processions which became so characteristic of the chapel culture. The Cambrian reported the procession of local Sunday schools which took place on Whit Monday 1843 'according to the usual custom'.[52] The procession, comprising schools from the English and Welsh chapels of central Swansea and amounting to over 2,700 people, marched from Burrows Square through the streets of the town. Later in the century, the opening of municipal parks provided the chapels with a useful facility. The Church Book records that Dinas Noddfa Baptist Church held a tea party at the nearby Parc Llywelyn for the first time in 1875.[53] Parc Llywelyn became a popular venue for such activities; a correspondent to The Cambrian in April 1879 stated that in the period immediately preceding, it had been used by a number of local chapels including Caersalem, Baptist, the Wesleyan Methodist at Landore, the English and Welsh Independent chapels at Landore, together with Brynhyfryd Baptist Sunday School.[54] The park at Ynystawe was similarly used by the chapels in the Morriston area. Such events were not welcomed by everyone, however. Evan Sims, one of the 'ffyddloniaid' [faithful] of Salem Capel y Cwm Calvinistic Methodist Church was

strongly opposed to 'picnics and Sunday school treats' which he regarded as frivolous activities.[55]

A key contribution made by the chapels was as providers of cultural activity within the new communities. This has already been examined in some detail, however, so that further investigation may be deemed unnecessary. In addition, the chapels also provided assistance in the struggle against poverty. Thus, in the eighteenth century, the records of Mynyddbach Independent Church contain many instances of the help given to individuals:

i) July 1770 - gave to Mr John Davies of the church money two shillings.[56]

ii) Collected December 1783 at Ty'r dunkin for the support of poor sickly persons of the congregation seven shillings.[57]

In 1821 members of the Mynyddbach congregation formed a benevolent society which also tried to promote the temperance principle.[58] The rules of the society state that membership was limited to a maximum of 140 individuals, and, significantly, was not open to those aged over forty five years. Benefits included weekly sickness payments of seven shillings for the first year and three shillings and six pence for the second year. In the event of death, the deceased's widow was to receive payments of seven pounds plus funeral expenses of three pounds. The rules also added that no one was to come to the meetings of the society in a

drunken condition. One of the members was David Davies the bookbinder:

> 6 February - entered into a club at Mynyddbach which began the first of January 1821.[59]

The first printed statement of accounts of the society was produced for the year 1856-7[60] At that time, the seventy-eight members comprised mainly industrial workers. The members paid seventeen to nineteen shillings annually, in return for which they received seven shillings weekly sick benefit as specified by the rules, as well as funeral expenses in the event of death.

Not surprisingly, a similar society was also formed at the daughter church at Siloh, Landore, in 1833.[61] This was an alternative to the sick clubs which were associated with the public houses of the district, and continued for seventy two years. In an age dominated by increasingly harsh welfare laws, such activities can only have enhanced the appeal of the chapel for many people.

This policy of caring for the poor continued throughout the century. The payment of £32.6.8$^{1}/_{2}$ made to the poor within its congregation [Tlodion yr Eglwys] in 1879 was typical of the sums disbursed by Ebenezer Independent Church, Swansea during these years.[62] Likewise payments were also made at the nearby Bethseda Baptist church. The Bethesda Reports show that at the

end of the nineteenth century it was customary to give five shillings each to needy persons, who were presumably members of the church.[63] The available evidence suggests that all the chapels within the locality took it upon themselves to provide such assistance.

Whilst the local chapels were prepared to help those unable to help themselves, they were also strong supporters of the self-improvement principle. The Cambrian, in 1845 reported a meeting held in Bethesda Chapel to establish a Benefit Building Society,[64] with the Rev E Jacob of Ebenezer as the chairman. A Mr Jenkins then addressed those present on 'the history and principles of the various forms of economic institutions for the working classes'. The meeting then decided to proceed with the proposed scheme.

This was not the only example of such an initiative shown by the local Nonconformists. In 1861, Rev Thomas Thomas, the enterprising minister of the Siloh Independent church, Landore and Richard Hughes, director of the local tinplate works, founded a building society to try to cope with the growing housing needs of the district.[65] The rules of the new society, drawn up by Thomas himself, were said to be based on those of a similar organisation in Swansea, which may be a possible reference to that formed at Bethesda. The local industrialist H H Vivian was so impressed that he passed a copy of the rules to Mr Gladstone for his perusal. The society, known as the Landore Terminating

Equitable Benefit Building Society, was reconstituted in 1875 when it adopted the new title of Landore Permanent Building Society, with Thomas Thomas as chairman.[66]

When all these facets are taken into consideration, it is clear that the chapels were quite complex organisations and that the task of ensuring that they functioned effectively was no mean undertaking. The congregations themselves bore ultimate responsibility, but for all practical purposes management was left to a small group of individuals who initially carried out their work informally. Gradually, these functions became clearly defined with the appearance of offices such as secretary and treasurer. It followed that the holders of these positions enjoyed a status in the local community which was commensurate with their often onerous responsibilities.

Often, those who played a leading part in the local chapels were people who had gained useful experience from their secular employments. One of the leading figures in the re-established Dinas Noddfa Baptist church in 1838 was Philip Benjamin, a supervisor at a local smelting works.[67] Craftsmen were frequently to be found in posts of responsibility in the chapels; one of the first deacons at Tabernacle Church Morriston was William Lewis, a shoemaker.[68] More rarely, to judge by the limited evidence available, ordinary workmen were called upon to fill such places; Jenkin Davies, a collier, was one of the first deacons at Dinas Noddfa Baptist Church, Landore.[69] Philip

Lloyd, also a collier, was the first secretary of the Welsh Independent Church at Cwmbwrla from 1860 till 1880.[70] A contemporary at the same church was Henry Williams, a copperworker who served as deacon and treasurer.[71]

The chapels in the industrial districts served overwhelmingly working class congregations. However, they received financial support from a number of local industrialists. This was true even though many of these were English and Anglican, like the Morrises and the Vivians. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Morrises were particularly prominent benefactors of the chapels. An early example of their assistance took place when Robert Morris granted land at a nominal rent for the building of the new Independent chapel at Mynyddbach in 1762.[72]

Subsequently, Sir John Morris co-operated in the building of Libanus Independent chapel, erected in 1782 in the industrial township which bore his name.[73] His former partners, the Lockwoods, provided a nearby site for the building of Philadelphia Calvinistic Methodist chapel in 1802.[74] A tablet inserted in the wall of this chapel bears the interesting inscription:

> The ground was given by Messrs Lockwood and Co at a nominal rent of one peppercorn per annum.

Some years later, Sir John Morris II continued the family tradition when he provided the land where Siloh Independent Chapel was built in Landore.[75]

Later in the century, when many of the original chapels were being enlarged, it became common to receive donations from industrialists who had been invited to attend opening services, or to lay foundation stones. The Vivians, as the leading industrialists were particularly active in this respect. The Cambrian reported that Messrs Vivian and Son had contributed the sum of twenty pounds to the rebuilding of Siloh, Landore, in 1841.[76] Then, when the chapel was rebuilt on a new site in 1878, Sir Henry Hussey Vivian contributed fifty pounds.[77] At the opening of the nearby Brynhyfryd Baptist Chapel in May 1883, a donation of twenty pounds was also received from the same source.[78] The laying of the foundation stone of the enlarged chapel at Dinas Noddfa was also accompanied by a gift of ten pounds.[79] Thus, virtually all the chapels in the vicinity of the Vivian Empire at Hafod benefited from Vivian support.

Behind the Vivians were other lesser figures. L W Dillwyn, whose business interests had included the Swansea pottery works provided land in Morriston for Horeb Independent Chapel[80] and Seion Baptist Chapel, although in the latter case, not without a little arm twisting.[81] Then there was William Thomas of Lan, Morriston, a prominent figure in later Victorian Swansea. Although Thomas was an Anglican, many of the Nonconformist churches in the vicinity of his residence benefited from his generosity. When, in June 1876, the foundation stone was laid of the new Siloh Independent Chapel at Brynhynfryd, William Thomas marked the occasion with a donation of twenty five pounds.[82] He

was also present when the foundation stone of Ainon English Baptist Chapel, Morriston, was laid in 1880.[83] A few years later, he presented ten guineas at the opening of the Welsh Baptist chapel in Brynhyfryd, in May 1883.[84] Another popular visitor at such events was E R Daniel Esq., of Cwmgelli, Treboeth, whose business interests included the local steel and tinplate works.

In time, industrialists and businessmen began to emerge from the Nonconformist churches within the industrial districts. The bigger Independent chapels seemed more adept in this respect than the remainder. Thus the congregation at Siloh, Landore, included Thomas Freeman (1842-1902), who combined his original career as a builder with involvement in a variety of local industrial undertakings, including the Villiers Spelter Works, Llansamlet, and the Clayton Tinplate Works, Pontardulais.[85] A contemporary was Richard Martin (1843-1922)[86] who was born at nearby Pentre Mawr, and educated at the Hafod copperworks school. Upon leaving school, Martin was employed at the Millbrook engineering works, Landore, following which he joined the Civil Service in 1867. His duties took him from the area for a number of years but after his return in 1875 his career changed direction once more when he became involved in the industries of the district. When the Welsh Church Commission visited Swansea in 1908, Martin, then a member of Walter Road Congregational Church, Swansea, appeared as an important witness.[87]

In Morriston, Horeb Independent Church could for many years count among its members the prominent industrialist William Williams of Maesygwernen. When, in 1878 he acquired the Forest Works, Williams was presented with an address to mark the occasion at Horeb chapel.[88] Many years later, in 1898, it was at Horeb that he made his farewell speech to his former employees, having relinquished his interest in the works.[89] Although described as 'yn gefn i'r achos yn y lle am flynyddau [backing the cause in the place for years], Williams, like Richard Martin, subsequently joined the English Congregational Church at Walter Road, Swansea.[90]

However, it was the Tabernacle Independent Church in Morriston which contained by far the most important group of industrialists, who were mainly connected with the local steel and tinplate works. The best known members of this group were John Jones Jenkins (Lord Glantawe), and Daniel Edwards, who was also the builder of the chapel. In addition, there was Richard Hughes, originally from North Wales, but then living in Ynystawe, and a director of the Landore Tinplate Works.[91] It was his daughter, Miss Hughes, 'Morfudd Glantawe', subsequently the wife of the royal doctor, Sir John Williams, who laid one of the foundation stones of the chapel[92] in 1870. A study of the foundation stones of local chapels would indeed be a veritable 'who's who' of Swansea society in the later Victorian period.

The presence of a well-heeled employer could be of benefit to a Nonconformist church in more than one way. In 1871, The Cambrian gave details of a fete held in the grounds of the Ynystawe home of Richard Hughes, at that time a member of Libanus, before it was replaced by Tabernacle. The event was attended by 500 children of the chapel, whilst the workmen at Hughes' Landore tinplate works were given a half day holiday 'in order to be present'. Moreover, other works in the district closed 'in honour of the occasion'. Those fortunate enough to be present were entertained by the Cwmbwrla Band and the Libanus choir.[93]

The chapels benefited in certain respects from the support of local industrialists: similarly the industrialists gained from the support of the chapels. The influence of the chapel minister could be useful in helping preserve industrial relations. It was only occasionally that ministers questioned the status quo. Thus John Davies, who became minister at Mynyddbach in 1840 gave a talk at Ebenezer Chapel, Aberdare, on 9 September 1839 entitled 'Moral Force Chartists' which was organised by the local branch of the movement and later published by Thomas Price of Merthyr. This work has been described as 'an interesting exposition of the moderate radicalism of Welsh congregational leaders of this period'.[94] Then again, Thomas Jones, part of whose dazzling career as an Independent minister was spent at Libanus, Morriston from 1851 till 1858 was also reputed to have been more interested in Chartism than religion during his younger days in the industrial valleys of Glamorgan.[95]

It is significant that both these individuals appeared to have abandoned what radical zeal they may have possessed when they came to Swansea, however. By and large, the local ministers could hardly be labelled as enemies of the employers. The response of Thomas Davies, then minister of Siloam Independent Chapel, Pentre Estyll to an industrial dispute involving the local copper workers in 1843 provides a graphic illustration of the prevailing attitude.[96] This dispute had arisen when the employers sought to reduce wages in response to a recession in the industry. Against a background of increasing tension, Davies attended a meeting of copper workers held on open land on the outskirts of the town. He urged the men to avoid strike action and reminded them that they had earned good wages in the past and that they should be prepared to accept the wage reductions because of the depression in the industry.

This speech was stated to have made a deep impression on the listeners who agreed to return to work on the following Monday. The Cambrian commented approvingly of Davies' actions:

> It is such ministers as Mr Davies whom we want to counteract the machinations of cool minded and mischievous men.[97]

Nevertheless, the 'electrifying' effect of Davies' speech did not remain for very long, for soon afterwards the men began a five week strike, which was unusual in the copper industry.

Possibly Davies would have been wiser to have sympathised more positively with the viewpoint of the men at a time when

Nonconformity was a considerable influence on the working classes. In August 1843, The Cambrian remarked that the Welsh 'mix up all their actions with their devotions', adding by way of illustration that 'the coppermen regularly hold prayer meetings at seven o'clock every morning, to implore the divine aid upon their exertions in maintaining the strike.'[98]

The conciliatory attitude adopted by Thomas Davies in 1843 appears to have been common amongst his fellow ministers for many years subsequently. Thus, his namesake, the long-serving minister of Horeb Independent Church Morriston, believed that the interests of the workers would be best served by negotiation [cyflafareddiad] with the masters and opposed confrontation ('sefyll allan o du y gweithwyr nac a chload allan o du y meistri').[99]

These were the views of a man, it must be recalled, who had been born and bred locally, and who had spent many years employed in the local copperworks, and who could never be accused of succumbing to the temptation to acquire the middle class 'respectability' of many fellow ministers.

This leads to a consideration of the motives which underpinned the relationship between industrialists and chapels. It can be argued that the financial and other types of support provided by industrialists were simply inspired by an awareness of the benefits which such public acts of benevolence could provide. Support for the local chapels might well help to maintain good

industrial relations which was so important to the profitability of the works. The chapels, moreover, stood for those qualities which made for an efficient workforce. It is against these factors that the support provided to the chapels even by Anglican employers becomes intelligible; it was cheaper to make donations to chapel building projects than to risk industrial conflicts. In these circumstances, the chapel ministers displayed at the very least, an enormous degree of compliance; at most, they were willing allies in a partnership which brought them considerable short-term gains. Put simply, they allowed Nonconformity to be used by industrialists just as the Established Church had been used by the gentry.

It would probably be unrealistic to assume that the Vivians and the other industrialists in the locality were influenced simply by a high minded sense of moral and social obligation. Similarly, the chapel ministers were not so unworldly as to be unaware of the realities of prevailing circumstances. Individuals like Rev Thomas Thomas of Siloh, Landore, had their feet only too firmly planted on the ground. However, this does not mean that both sides abandoned any sense of principle or that they were motivated purely out of self interest. Instead, both industry and Nonconformity tried to work within the prevailing system. Chapel ministers were acting for what they conceived to be the interests of their congregations when they solicited the help of industrialists who were the leaders of local society. If rank and file Nonconformists objected to such tactics, they gave little

indication. Conversely, the standing of an industrialist who refused such requests would have diminished within the community, as Lewis Weston Dillwyn was reminded when he displayed a certain reluctance to provide land for the proposed Seion Baptist Church in Morriston in 1847. Again it is highly unlikely that ministers who opposed working class industrial action did so in the knowledge that they might have been deliberately sacrificing the interests of those who formed the backbone of their congregations.

Whether the ministers harmed their cause by such behaviour is another question. Certainly, there is no evidence to show that working people gave up membership of their chapels because of the alleged influence of the local captains of industry, or that others were dissuaded from joining the movement. The relatively few chapels whose congregations did include local industrialists do not appear to have suffered; indeed, the reverse would appear to have been the case. On the other hand, those chapels which did not include a tin-plate works owner or two do not appear to have benefited to any appreciable extent.

In many ways, therefore, the emergence of the industrial society helped the development of Nonconformity within the locality. There is little evidence, however, to suggest that its impact was anything but general to the movement as a whole, rather than to specific denominations. Nor should this be cause for surprise, given that the major denominations had so much in common. There is nothing to support the view that those in a particular

occupation or industry were drawn to certain denominations, or that they were discouraged from others. A chapel congregation might include a large proportion of steel and tin-plate workers for no other reason than its situation in a community where such industries were predominant. Again, the relative strengths of the various denominations varied across the different communities within the district but this was probably due to missionary activity rather than to anything else. Thus the dominant position occupied by the Calvinistic Methodists in parts of Llansamlet parish was largely due to the efforts of Methodist evangelists in the eighteenth century. There is probably a ring of truth in the words of the copperworks employee who was interviewed for the Welsh Education Commission of 1846-7:

> At that time an Independent minister came to look after us - if he had been Baptist, Churchman or anyone else to have drawn the net, he would have had us all.(100)

The discussion so far has stressed the ways in which Nonconformity gained from the emergence of the industrial society. However, the new circumstances were not without their problems. The needs of the industrial economy could conflict with those of the chapels. Industry, particularly in the Swansea area, demanded Sunday work, which prevented or impeded attendance at chapel. This, of course, was a problem which affected organised religion as a whole; in 1816, the church wardens of Llansamlet parish reported that absenteeism from church services was prevalent among 'the coppermen and enginemen' of the area.(101) It was to be a particular problem to the Nonconformists, since their

congregations were derived in the main from people employed in such industries. In 1847, Rev Daniel Davies of Bethesda Baptist church, Swansea, had referred to the practice of Sunday working when discussing the reasons why the Sunday schools were less popular than they might have been.[102] Again, in 1851, the minister of Canaan Independent church, Foxhole, mentioned the same difficulty when completing his Return for the Religious Census of that year. He explained that the much bigger attendances at evening services compared with those in the morning was because 'many of the coppermen work from Saturday morning until Sunday morning; consequently they cannot attend until the evening'.[103] Presumably, therefore, there were limits to the piety of the local industrialists.

Economic uncertainty was another problem. The local economy was generally less susceptible to slumps than was the case in other parts of industrial South Wales but it was by no means immune. It has been argued that during the early decades of the nineteenth century, slumps actually benefited the chapels since people turned to religion for succour against forces they could not understand and before which they felt a sense of helplessness. This argument notwithstanding, in the later decades of the century economic recession could be to the disadvantage of chapels. Siloam Independent chapel, Pentre Estyll, suffered badly from the slump in the tin-plate industry which was caused by the American McKinley Tariff of 1891, since many families within its congregation depended upon the nearby Cwmfelin works for their

livelihood.[104] The Annual Report described 1893 as 'blwyddyn na fu yn nghof neb ohonom ni drymach mewn caledi masnachol'[a year that none of us could recall its rival for commercial hardship].[105] Matters reached crisis point in June 1896 when Cwmfelin was forced to close, leaving 1000 men jobless following three years of low wages. The Cambrian which reported the closure added that the situation in the industrial areas had 'become so serious that special prayers have been offered in the chapels, and last week a relief fund was formed'.[106] Many people decided upon an alternative solution to their difficulties by emigrating to America as a result of which Siloam suffered a substantial drop in membership. This experience was repeated at the nearby Libanus Baptist Church, Cwmbwrla, when one hundred members emigrated to America during 1897 and 1898.[107]

Even when there was no dramatic loss of membership, slumps could cause difficulties leading to reductions in the financial contributions of the chapel congregations. This could cause particular embarrassment to those chapels in industrial areas which were engaged in expensive rebuilding programmes. This was the situation in which Dinas Noddfa Baptist church, Landore, found itself after the new enlarged chapel was completed in 1884.[108] Poverty in general could discourage chapel attendance. An official from Ebenezer Independent Church, Swansea, who appeared as a witness before the Welsh Church Commission in 1908 stated that many people living near his chapel did not have decent clothing to attend places of worship.[109]

A more difficult question is temperance, which from the 1830s grew in importance to become one of the fundamentals of Nonconformity. Certainly, many contemporaries believed that conditions in the industrial districts were an encouragement to insobriety.[110] Amongst the working population of Swansea it was widely held that beer drinking was necessary to acquire sufficient strength and stamina to cope with arduous manual labour in conditions of great heat.[111] Joseph Maybery of Siloh Independent Church, Landore, an ardent temperance supporter, described in a letter to Diwygiwr in 1838 that one of the obstacles to the growth of temperance in the locality was the fear of many workmen that giving up strong drink would impair their physical strength.[112] He also added that this had been disproved because some individuals had abstained without suffering any adverse effects. Nevertheless, this view remained widespread for many years. Thomas Davies, minister of Horeb, Morriston, another staunch supporter of temperance, apparently amazed his fellow copper workers when he demonstrated that abstinence did not mean an inability to perform hard physical labour.[113] Possibly some individuals justified their fondness for beer drinking by referring to the alleged connection with physical strength.

There can be no doubt that heavy drinking was one of the besetting problems of the area, even amongst chapel goers. The surviving records of the chapels are full of references to the problem and of the measures taken to try to discourage it, such as expulsion. The practice even extended to the pulpit, for in June 1842 no less

a person than Rev Thomas Davies was expelled from his pastorate at Ebenezer Independent church, Swansea, for his failings in this respect.[114] However, heavy drinking was not something which had been invented by the industrial society, nor was it somehow or other inevitable. It did, nevertheless, prove to be an intractable problem despite the efforts made by the chapels, with their lectures, temperance societies, and recreational activities, not to mention the attacks launched from the pulpits on Sundays. Here and there, the temperance movement achieved some success. In 1854, Dr Thomas Williams stated that 'teetotalism is professed and rigorously practised by a considerable number of furnacemen in all the copperworks of the district.'[115] He added that whereas large amounts of beer had formerly been brought into the works for consumption, this had been replaced by water. On the other hand, Williams also stated that many workers spent as much as one quarter of their wages on beer.[116] At the very least, Nonconformists drew attention to the problem which might have been even more widespread without their opposition.

The extent to which the close relationship with temperance affected the popularity of Nonconformity is difficult to gauge. In the absence of clear evidence it is only possible to conjecture. The widespread popularity of beer drinking even when Nonconformity had established itself as a powerful force in local society must mean that many people became chapel goers even though they rejected the anti-drink message in deed, if not in word. Whether individuals refused to become chapel goers because of the

drink issue is also difficult to resolve. However, a minister who was outspoken in condemning beer drinking risked arousing antagonism amongst his congregation. John Jones ('Mathetes') campaigned vigorously against the heavy drinking prevalent in the district when he became minister of Caersalem Newydd Baptist church in 1848.[117] He insisted that his deacons should abandon the established practice of attending the local tavern after attending Sunday service. However, his attitude caused much resentment amongst some members of the congregation and may account for the shabby treatment which he received whilst at Caersalem.

What did have serious implications for the position of the local Nonconformist movement were the continuing social changes after the middle years of the nineteenth century. Initially, social change had assisted the growth of Nonconformity, which in turn had shown itself peculiarly capable of responding positively to these changes. However, as the century continued, it was accompanied by social changes which caused new challenges for the movement.

One aspect of change related to inward migration. The advantages which this process had conferred upon Nonconformity tended to diminish, and were instead replaced by problems. The increasing numbers of newcomers from outside Wales created an obvious predicament for the Welsh language chapels. To make matters worse, an appreciable proportion of these appearing in the district from further afield were not regular worshippers. In

1851, Horace Mann had pointed out that 'a sadly formidable portion of the English people are habitual neglecters of the public ordinances of worship'.[118] In contrast, Thomas Rees in 1864 waxed eloquent in his praise of the piety of Welsh workers, describing this as 'their crowning glory'.[119] The sheer volume of numbers of incomers added to the extent of the problem.

To Rees and others, the solution was to be found in building more chapels for the English-speaking community, a process which was further encouraged by what was seen to be the imminent and inevitable disappearance of the Welsh language. However, this situation was not as simple as many believed. There was a tendency for English Nonconformists who belonged to the middle class to abandon the chapel for the Anglican Church once they came to industrial South Wales.[120] This, it was alleged, was because they felt uncomfortable in the more relaxed and homely working class atmosphere which pervaded even the English language chapels in the industrial districts. Thus, in 1879, Rev William Williams of Swansea remarked that 'social considerations' explain why so many Nonconformist incomers, especially those who had 'risen in the world' were prone to turn to the Church.[121] Whether this was really a serious problem in the industrial districts of Swansea is doubtful, however, since such individuals settled in the town itself where the English language chapels always attracted congregations which were more socially diverse.

The influx of large numbers of people from outside Wales did threaten in other respects, however. The presence of large numbers of English speaking incomers meant that native-born Welsh speakers become anglicised and ceased to attend Welsh language chapels. This, however, did not lead to an automatic transfer to the English language chapels, as David Lloyd of Ebenezer Independent church told the members of the Welsh Church Commission:

> In the poor district round our church where the people drop the language they drop attending services.[122]

But perhaps even more important was the fact that in an increasingly complex society which emerged from 1860 the Nonconformist churches could no longer fulfil the social role they had adopted, or had thrust upon them. The chapels had been used as providers of education, yet their contribution, as they themselves admitted, fell far short of what was required. This had always been the case, but the gap was widening considerably as the century drew to its close. The chapels simply did not have the resources to provide what was required; the new Swansea School Board, set up after the 1870 Act estimated that there was a deficiency of 4,035 school places in the town, despite the combined efforts of organised religion and those others then involved in education.[123]

The difficulties which the chapels faced as providers of the social needs of a rapidly changing society help to explain why their contribution was being supplemented or even replaced by

alternatives. Their role as providers of communal recreation was challenged by more colourful attractions. Whereas at the start of the nineteenth century, professional entertainment had catered for more sophisticated audiences, attention slowly turned to supplying the needs of the masses; circuses instead of Shakespeare. Such entertainments were most frequently available in the town of Swansea itself. In 1864,the Music Hall , later renamed the Albert Hall, opened its doors, followed in 1869 by the Star Amphitheatre and the Pavilion Music Hall in 1888.[124] The latter, in turn renamed the Empire and then the Palace, was built in a part of the town where stood some of the oldest and most prominent of Swansea's chapels. Its appearance was a clear sign of the more secular society which was emerging. In such comfortable surroundings people could enjoy more uninhibited but still harmless pleasures. The very appearance of such buildings formed a marked contrast with the puritanical chapels. Nor was it necessary to look to the chapels for concert entertainments. In the eighties and nineties, the Drill Hall was a particularly popular Saturday evening venue with its concerts known as 'Saturday Pops'.[125] The presence at such events of singers like the tenor Eos Morlais (Robert Rees), who was well known in local chapels enhanced the respectability of such events.

For those who wished to enjoy musical activities as participants rather than observers, the opportunities were available outside the chapels. The Swansea Amateur Choral Society, formed in 1848, actually predated many of the chapel choirs.[126] Again, whilst

instrumental music was always the poor relation of the choir, some activity also took place in this direction. The Cambrian in 1875 gave notice regarding the formation of a Swansea Public Band, which was to play during the summer months at various locations in the district.[127] To rectify the shortage of instrumentalists, a number of individuals offered private tuition, of which the best known was Dr Joseph Parry, who during his sojourn in the town formed The Musical College of Wales in 1881,[128] although it proved to be a short-lived venture.

In the outlying industrial districts, the chapels still dominated with their own fare to a much greater extent. One person who lived in Llansamlet towards the end of the nineteenth century described it as a place where there was 'no theatre, no cinema.... The chapel was a centre of light and interest to which the whole village gravitated.'[129] However, changes were taking place even in these areas by the close of the century. Morriston acquired its 'palace of varieties' although in this case the chapels had the last laugh when it was taken over by the Forward Movement in 1903.[130] Then again, there were the brass bands which emerged in a number of industrial localities. In Morriston, Hanney's Band, formed at the end of the nineteenth century enjoyed a fine reputation in the years before 1914, which culminated in its victory at an international competition in Paris in 1912.[131]

Another increasingly powerful attraction was organised sport, the danger of which was the greater because it appealed especially to

young males, whose allegiance the chapels had often been found more difficult to secure than other sections of the community. Moreover, conditions in the industrial communities were especially conducive to organised sport, with large numbers of potential participants who were accustomed to communal activity and with gradually increasing leisure time. In addition, much encouragement was provided by industrialists such as the Grenfells and the Vivians, who were convinced of the beneficial effects of sport upon the social habits of their workers. Organised sport became increasingly popular from the 1870s as part of a 'recreational revolution', when ordinary working people took part in activities which had previously been confined to the middle and upper classes. Cricket, rugby and football enjoyed a particular popularity and prestige, but other activities such as cycling, boxing and athletics also attracted their devotees.

This new sporting culture presented Nonconformists with a challenge which was difficult to resolve. A minority, especially the English Wesleyans, sought a solution by promoting sporting activity within their own churches. The remainder, especially the Welsh language Nonconfomists, chose to adopt a negative attitude. On the whole, the alleged moral benefits of organised sport received short shrift from the Nonconformists.

The chapels existed as self-help organisations to provide for the spiritual and social needs of the industrial communities. However, during the course of the nineteenth century other

organisations emerged with the objective of supplying the latter, and other strategies were developed. These included friendly societies, which developed rapidly after 1840, and became more ubiquitous and popular than even the chapels in the area.[132] Apart from the usual financial assistance, they too, contributed to the community in various ways. Encouragement was given to cultural events such as the eisteddfod; in 1854 - the Order of Ivorites is said to have held an eisteddfod in Morriston.[133] In time, trade unions made their appearance, although their progress in the Swansea area was slower than elsewhere. Most of those workers in what were held to be unskilled jobs did not become unionised until after 1887. The tin-plate workers were an exception; the Independent Association of Tin-plate Workers was formed in 1871, with its secretary William Lewis (Lewya Afan).

The relationship between the Nonconformists churches and these other organisations was closer than has sometimes been suggested. Expensive chapel building schemes were aided by loans from friendly societies. Thus, Bethlehem Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Pentrechwyth was helped by loans from a number of friendly societies based in various local meeting places:

The Smiths' Arms [Llansamlet]	£ 50
The Colliers' Arms [Llansamlet]	£150
Cwrt Rhosyn Salem	£250
(meeting in Capel y Cwm)[134]	

Similarly, the building of Salim English Baptist Chapel, Landore, in 1884 was helped by the £230 provided by the Cyfarthfa, Merthyr Tydfil lodge of Oddfellows.[135]

The links between the Nonconformist churches and these labour organisations were strengthened by individuals who were present in both. Thus, William Lewis of the tin-plate union was also a member of Babell Calvinistic Methodist church, Cwmbwrla. Indeed, there are instances of chapel officials who occupied similar roles in the labour movement. David Jones was one of the founders of Mount Zion Baptist Church in central Swansea in 1866, where he continued to play a key role as a lay preacher for a number of years. His religious beliefs served as the foundation of a political and social ideology which led to an involvement with the local labour movement, including selection as president of the Trades Council in 1891.[136] James Wignall, pastor of Tabernacle Baptist church in Tontine Street, Swansea, was the first district secretary of the dockers' union.[137] David Williams, secretary of the boilermakers' union and the first Labour Member of Parliament for Swansea East from 1922 until 1940 was a Sunday school teacher, choir leader, and secretary of the Temperance League.[138] The chapels were not the 'no-go' areas for trade unionists that they have sometimes been portrayed. In 1891, Salim Baptist church, Landore, allowed a 'trade union club' to meet in the chapel on Friday evenings.[139] Significantly, perhaps, Salim was an English language church. It would appear that at the end

of the nineteenth century, English language Nonconformity was more responsive to the labour movement than its Welsh equivalent.

Increasingly, too, local government was attracting interest as its potential for dealing with the needs of the local community grew as a result of reforms which provided more powers and resources. The big problem was that local government was very much the preserve of the middle classes until electoral reform made possible the entry of the community as a whole towards the close of the century. Individuals who had once gained a certain fulfilment by holding posts in the chapels now turned to local government.

As with the labour organisations, there were links between Nonconformity and local government. Some of the most prominent figures in the chapels were also chosen to serve as elected representatives. Rev G B Brock, minister of the town's Unitarian Church for much of the period from 1836 until 1853, later had an active career in local government.[140] Apart from serving on various local government boards, he was also a member of the town council of which he became mayor. During his career in local government, he played a leading part in the foundation of the Free Library.[141]

Perhaps inevitably, the powerful Siloh Independent Church, Landore was well represented in local government. William Williams of Wern House, Landore, was a member of the Swansea Board of

Guardians as well as the town council.[142] Thomas Freeman,[143] too, had a notable career in local government. Elected as councillor for Landore in 1879, Freeman was active in a number of spheres of public administration. As chairman of the health committee, he played a crucial role in what was probably the most important aspect of local government during that period. In addition, he was a Swansea Harbour trustee, and supported Richard Martin in establising the Intermediate Education scheme within the borough. In 1889 his efforts were recognised when he became mayor of the enlarged borough. Rev Thomas Thomas of Siloh was also involved in local government as a member of the Swansea Board of Education.[144] His fellow minister at Bethlehem Cadle, John Davies, was another active participant in local government.[145] Interestingly, the Independents appear to have been much more to the fore in local government than their rivals, the Baptists and the Methodists.

However, not all ministers had the inclination or the qualities necessary to participate in such activities. At the same time, the danger was that those lay members of Nonconformist churches who were active in public life would be succeeded by others whose concerns would be entirely with the latter.

These trends were emerging whilst the influence of the Nonconformist churches still loomed over their communities, like their buildings. Those who were born and bred in the movement were unlikely to foresake it; the problem was that those outside

were increasingly unlikely to join it. It was against this background that the Revival of 1904 took place.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

What emerges, above all, from this study is that Nonconformity is easier to describe than it is to analyse and explain. It was a movement which permeated so much of the life of Wales in the nineteenth century, yet any attempt at detailed examination is fraught with difficulty. Too often, statements about Nonconformity turn out to be assertions based upon inadequate evidence. Possibly this is due to the nature of the subject itself. With these cautionary remarks, the conclusions arising from this study are presented.

One point which must be stressed at the outset, is that the growth of Nonconformity in Swansea owed much to the power of religious conviction. This may seem obvious, but it is a factor which needs to be emphasised in an age which tends to interpret the past in secular terms only. Perhaps the clearest, most unequivocal illustration of the influence of this principle on the attitudes and actions of large numbers of people in the industrial communities which emerged in the Swansea area from the late eighteenth century comes from the diary of the bookbinder David Davies of Treboeth, whose writings convey a profound sense of religious belief unadulterated by other considerations.[1]

What was crucial in bringing about this deep spiritual awareness to David Davies' generation, and to others subsequently, was the

religious awakening of the eighteenth century, a movement which was vigorously propagated by those minorities, both old and new, which dissented from the religious establishment in England and in Wales. In the Swansea area, conditions were especially propitious for this invigorated and invigorating form of Christianity. First, the district was within fairly easy reach of those parts of Wales where, in the 1730s, the movement was establishing its Welsh roots. Thus, as early as 1739, Howell Harris had been active in Swansea, as was indicated by the foundation of what was to become a powerful Welsh Methodist movement in Llansamlet parish. Moreover, the linguistic situation in the town of Swansea in particular, meant that it was more susceptible to English Wesleyan influences than might otherwise have been the case. In Swansea too, the Established Church was as ineffectual as in other parts of Wales. Finally, Swansea was the home of a small but tenacious tradition of Dissent which probably assisted in the spread of the new movement by undermining the usual religious allegiances as well as participating itself in what was taking place. Thus, the Independent tradition, which had existed in Llangyfelach parish since the mid seventeenth century, not only survived the challenge of the new Methodist 'dissent' but actually benefited by adopting the approaches with which the latter was associated.

However, what ensured that the activities of Howell Harris and others met with success, was that they provided a Christianity which met the needs and tastes of people in the locality. They brought their religion to the people, rather than expecting the

people to come to them. The most obvious illustration of this principle is the way in which causes were founded, and places of worship established, wherever they were deemed necessary. This was probably a more important factor in the developing industrial communities of Swansea than in the more settled rural districts elsewhere. In addition, the advocates of the new approaches automatically carried out their activities in the language most commonly used by those whom they sought to influence. This meant that Welsh was used as a matter of course in the communities involved, which were to be largely Welsh speaking during the eighteenth century and for much of that which followed.

Effective presentation was thus an important factor, but ultimately it was the nature of the message itself which won so many converts. The older forms of Dissent had always had a particular appeal to those of an independent, individualistic outlook. In the Swansea area the breakdown of traditional economic and social patterns under the impact of industrialisation may have made such attitudes more common. Above all, this new and exciting form of Christianity offered a sense of spiritual certainty to people whose lives were suffused with uncertainty. This was of especial importance to those in the new industrial society of Swansea. In this new industrial society, individuals continued to be fully exposed to the traditional threats of disease and sickness, serious injury or violent death. In addition, however, there were new risks and new challenges which accompanied the new opportunities and expectations; higher wages

could be counterbalanced by the threat of unemployment. Above all, the new industrial society was dominated by a sense of insecurity stemming from the profound and rapid changes taking place. These circumstances made many people more receptive to the reassurance offered by the supporters of the new movement. Little wonder, then, that nineteenth century Nonconformity had a particular appeal for the working classes. This was greatest amongst those whose feelings of apprehension did not exclude the belief that the new society offered greater possibilities than the old.

If the need for reassurance was true of the people within the locality, it applied even more forcefully to those newcomers who came seeking to escape the grinding poverty of the rural heartland. For such individuals, the industrial society was a venture into the unknown, and the presence of a chapel was a welcome landmark, especially to those already imbued with the new Christianity. Little wonder then that so many of these newcomers became active participants in the movement. As such, they did much to reinforce what was taking place, but they were not its authors. It is not true that Nonconformity in industrial Swansea was an implant from the rural hinterland, which would not have occurred without migration into the district.

This new Christianity of Dissent, or Nonconformity thus had a particularly powerful spiritual appeal to those living in the industrial settlements emerging in the Swansea area from the late

eighteenth century. However, the movement also fulfilled other rôles in these communities, which in other times would have been provided in other ways and by other agencies. It was the Nonconformist churches which provided their communities with opportunities for education, for cultural and recreational activity, together with opportunities for social intercourse. Moreover, whilst it is known and generally accepted that Nonconformity instilled those qualities which aided the material development of many individuals, it should not be overlooked that the churches were often involved with self help schemes designed to assist both members and outsiders. These activities were not seen as separate from the basic spiritual purpose of the movement, but rather were integral within it. Nonconformity assumed a greater relevance because it was part of everyday life. The contributions which the movement made in these directions were perhaps most easily discernible in the industrial districts, but even in central Swansea, there were Nonconformist churches performing equally important and similar roles for the poorer and less privileged classes. The pleasures and opportunities existing within the town were, for the most part, for the privileged few during much of the nineteenth century.

Under such circumstances, religious idealism was only one of a number of motives which seemed to inspire attendance at the local chapel. In many cases, such motives were so closely intertwined as to be impossible to disentangle, but existed more or less comfortably alongside each other. However, for a not

inconsiderable number of people, it would appear that religious idealism had very little relevance. Certainly, not all who attended the chapels were models of piety, to judge by contemporary reports and even the surviving chapel records. Such people found the chapels, with their increasingly austere moral codes, uncongenial places, despite their other attractions. This would help to explain the quite considerable turn-over of membership which appears especially noticeable during the earlier decades of the century. Spiritual zeal did not necessarily have to exist in isolation: other motives were not sufficient without an element of spiritual zeal.

Nonconformity was thus a powerful influence in the industrial society of nineteenth century Swansea. However, the use which the movement made of this power in some directions has aroused considerable opprobrium. it has been accused of co-operating with a system when there was much social injustice, much moral and social deprivation. Indeed, the movement has actually been accused of impeding attempts to overcome these conditions. In Swansea, it would appear that the movement as a whole did accept and support the status quo. The deferential attitude of the chapels to local industry is typified by an entry in the minute book of Salim English Baptist Church, Landore, dated 29 October 1890, in which it was agreed that the pastor was to write to the employers of one of its members, to thank them 'for their favours' in giving him suitable employment after an accident.[1] However, Nonconformists believed that the evils present in contemporary

society were the result of human frailty, rather than because of any inherent deficiencies in the system itself. Moreover, in working with the existing order, the movement was adopting an approach which was common for much of the nineteenth century. Nonconformity was, after all, part of a society in which a workman could write a poem in `1854 praising Messrs Vivian and Sons for providing work for local people.[2] It was not that Nonconformists ignored or even deliberately sought to impede the aspirations of working people, but rather that they sought to achieve these aspirations using the approaches most widely approved at the time.

This willingness to accept the existing order is especially understandable in the Swansea area where employers were often closely integrated within the local community, and were frequently members of the local Nonconformist churches. In addition, in these communities, the Nonconformists did not have to struggle against the antagonisms of the social and political elites as was the case elsewhere. It is, therefore, probable that Nonconformity in the locality did exercise a restraining influence upon labour relations but this was a factor of limited importance only. More significant was the nature of the local economy, which tended to discourage confrontation in industrial relations.

A Nonconformist visitor from the rural heartland of Wales to late Victorian Swansea could hardly have failed not to have been impressed by the appearance of many of the chapels in the

district. Apart from their sheer size, which was to be expected, he or she would have noted the architectural embellishments which were part of many chapels, and which formed such a marked contrast with the plain, unprepossessing structures found elsewhere. Inside the buildings, the contrast would have continued, through the use of ornate plasterwork on the ceilings, whilst the often stained glass windows would now be seen to their best advantage. The overall impression was that the Nonconformity of this part of urban-industrial Wales could call upon greater resources of wealth than its poorer rural counterpart. It should be noted, too, that the most substantial chapels were found, not in the middle class districts, but in those populated by the industrial working classes, notably at Landore and Morriston. This also helps to explain why the local Nonconformist movement was able to sustain a cultural activity which was especially rich and vigorous, with a particular emphasis on music.

Another feature of Swansea's Nonconformity which might have been noted was its diversity. The characteristic pattern of Welsh Nonconformity has been described as being simpler than that found in England, with fewer denominations. It is doubtful whether this could be applied to the local situation, where virtually all the movements within Nonconformity were to be found, ranging from the leading denominations, with their many churches to those smaller, more obscure movements with their correspondingly fewer churches, usually tucked away in the side-streets of the locality. What this means was that Swansea's Nonconformity possessed a richness

which was absent from many other parts of Wales. In this respect, the movement as a whole reflected the character of the town itself.

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that the kind of Nonconformity found in the industrial society of Swansea was fundamentally different from that found elsewhere in Wales. The movement, after all, had the same spiritual functions, the same procedures for fulfilling those functions whether in Swansea or anywhere else in Wales. This was further strengthened by the presence of ministers from the rural areas in so many of the local pulpits. Swansea's Nonconformity may have been more affluent, more diverse, but was essentially no different in spirit from that found elsewhere.

It is clear that by the middle of the nineteenth century, the chapels were the visible signs of a movement of increasing power and significance within the local industrial society. What is less evident is that the foundations of that success were possibly rather brittle. Social changes, which had contributed so significantly to the growth of the movement could also have the opposite effect. The uncertainty and anxiety so widespread at the start of the century and for long afterwards had to a considerable extent subsided as it drew to its close. Moreover, much of what the Nonconformist churches alone had provided became available elsewhere as the means and the will to provide for the needs of society expanded. In a changing world, which posed new

challenges, Nonconformity could only present an increasingly negative character which contrasted with the earlier years of the century when it had so much to offer in so many different ways.

To make matters worse, possibly as early as the 1860s, the pioneering spirit seems to have been draining away from the movement, at least among the Welsh language churches. This would appear, on the surface, to be an unusual statement about a period which witnessed chapel building on a spectacular scale but it has a ring of truth, to judge by the comments of even sympathetic contemporaries, and the muted impact of revivalist activities. The most exciting initiatives of the closing decades of the nineteenth century were associated with the English language churches of the movement. As for the Welsh language churches of the movement, they seem to have jettisoned much of the character which contributed to their successes in the earlier years. Instead, the large congregations attracted almost as a matter of course may well have induced a dangerous sense of complacency which boded ill for the future.

These factors were, however, less easy to uncover in an age when Nonconformity appeared to be advancing to even greater heights. In a sense, the Revival of 1904-5 helped to conceal these weaknesses. The reality of the situation was, however, to be fully revealed in the years which followed.

CHAPTER 6

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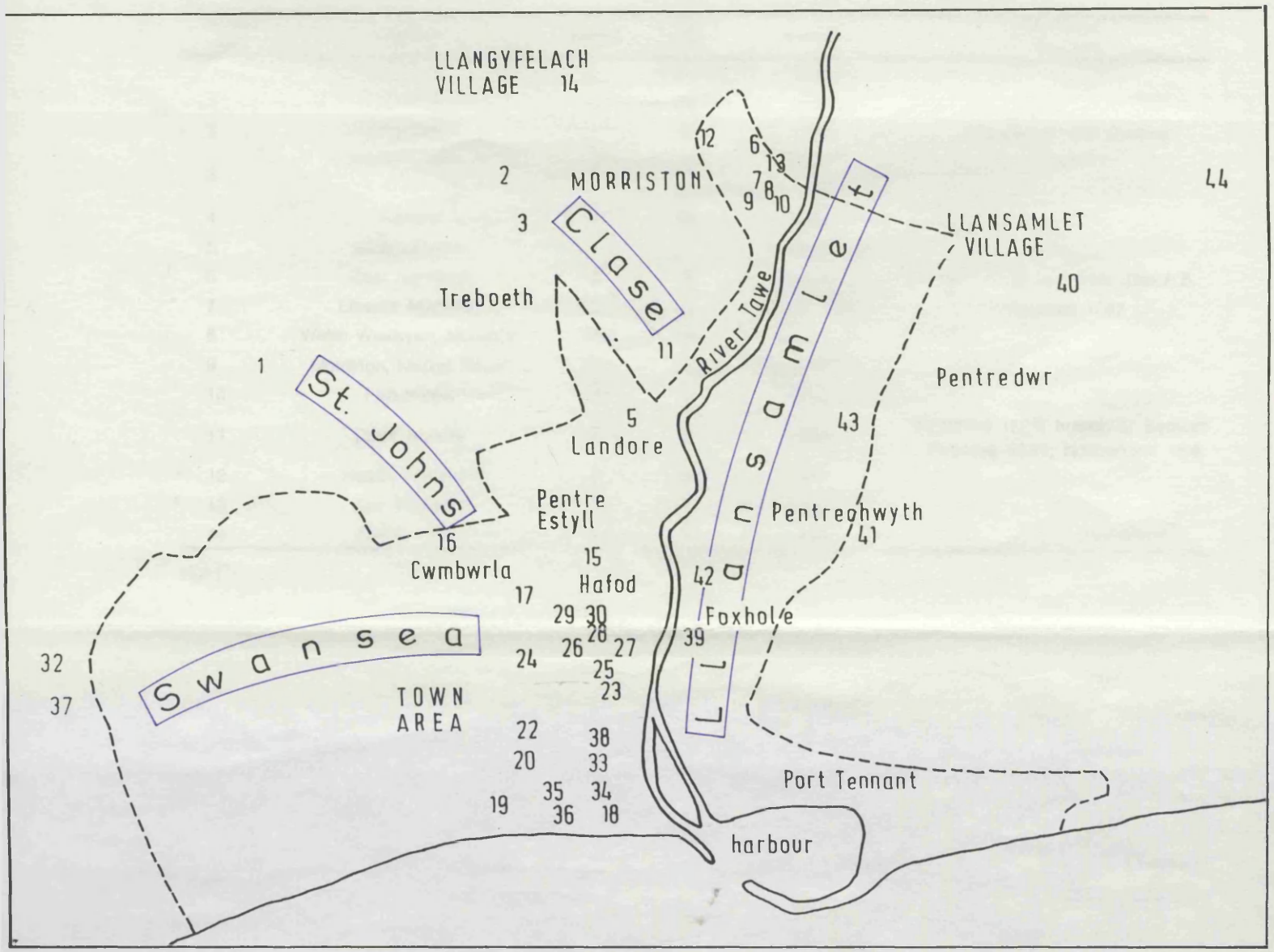
APPENDIX A : A MAP OF THE AREA, SHOWING NONCONFORMIST PLACES OF WORSHIP AS LISTED IN THE RELIGIOUS CENSUS 1851



KEY: Omissions:

Felindre	(4)
Newton	(21)
Siloam Killay	(31)

Municipal boundary in 1851 ----------

Parishes or sub-divisions marked in blue

Appendix B
Swansea Nonconformity in 1851
Places of Worship as listed in the Religious Census, 1851

No on map	Chapel et	Denom.	Lan E/W	Erected	Additional Comment
			Llangyfelach - Penderry		
1	Bethlehem	I	W	1840	
2	Mynyddbach	I	W	1762	Founded in 17th Century
3	Caersalem Newydd	B	W	1839	
			Llangyfelach - Clase		
4	Felindre	I	W	1821	
5	Siloh Landore	I	W	1829	
6	Zoar Morriston	B	W	1850	Temporary split from Zion P.B.
7	Libanus Morriston	I	W	'before 1800'	Founded 1782
8	Welsh Wesleyan, Morriston	WM	W	-	
9	Morriston, Market Room	WM	E	'Since 1800'	
10	Philadelphia	CM	W	1802	
11	Dinas Noddfa	PB	W	1823	Dissolved 1823; branch of Bethesda Swansea 1838; Independent 184
12	Horeb, Morriston	I	W	1843	
13	Zion Morriston	PB	W	1847	
14	Bethel Clase	CM	W	1809	

Appendix B
Swansea Nonconformity in 1851
Places of Worship as listed in the Religious Census, 1851

No on Map	Chapel etc	Denom.	Lan E/W	Erected	Additional comment
			St John's		
15	Sloam, Pentre Estyll	I	W	1839	Actually founded 1841
			Swansea Parish - High Divison		
16	Babell Schoolroom	CM	W	1838	
17	Waunwen Schoolroom	I	W	1843	Branch of Ebenezer
18	Huntingdon		E	1791	Actually founded 1789
19	Bethany	CM	E	1847	
20	Trinity	CM	W	1829	
21	Newton	WM	E	1825	
22	Heathfield	N	E	1826	Later known as Mount Pleasant
23	Capel Sion	I	W	1849	Erected on a nearby site in 1843
24	Tower Lane	PM	E	1838	
25	Ebenezer	I	W	1826	Originally erected 1804
26	Tabernacle	WM	W	1812	
27	Bethesda	B	W	1830	Orignally founded on a separate site as Heol Gefn
28	Greenhill	CM	W	1799	Known as Crug Glas
29	Soar, High Street.	I	W	1849	
30	Bethlehem	PB	W	1850	Later rebuilt as Philadelphia, in the Hafod

Appendix B: Continued

No on Map	Chapel etc	Denom.	Lan E/W	Erected	Additional comment
		Swansea Parish - higher division continued			
31	Siloam	B	W	1830	
32	Bethel Newydd, Sketty	I	W	1770	'or before 1800'
33	Unitarian, High Street		E		Founded in 17th century
34	Castle Street	I	E	'About 1815'	
35	Wesley Chapel	WM	E	'Before 1800'	
36	York Place	B	E	1828	
37	Sketty	WM	E	1842	
38	Society of Friends		E	before 1800	Founded in 17th century
			Llansamlet		
39	Canaan	I	W	1839	
40	Bethel	I	W	1818	
41	Adulam	B	W	1848	
42	Tabernacle	B	W	1929	
43	Salem	CM	W	1782	
44	Ebenezer	CM	W	1834	

KEY

B Baptist
PB Particular Baptist
I Independent
CM Calvinistic Methodist
PM Primitive Methodist
WM Wesleyan Methodist

APPENDIX C

NONCONFORMIST SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN SWANSEA IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

Illustrative extracts from the Children's Employment Commission, 1842, Appendix, Part II, PP.XV-VII

A. CHILDREN EMPLOYED IN THE COPPER WORKS.

James Hughes aged 10, Phillip Evans aged 13 years
James has been at work for a year. Phillip has been at work for three years. Phillip can read, James cannot. We both go to the Sunday school.

William Evans 13 and Henry James, 15 - employed at the copper works
'We both go to the Sunday school when we can.'

Isaac Davies, 15 Copperworker
'I've been working since I was 13 years. I've been in school and can read and write. I go to the Sunday school'.

John Jenkins 11 years - deal boy
Had been employed for 4 years at the furnaces. 'I am beginning to learn the Welsh letters at [the Rev] Mr Morgan's Sunday school'.
(very ignorant, sickly in appearance)

William Morrison aged 14 years - calciner boy
Has never been to day school; is learning the letters at Sunday school and sometimes attends chapel. Never heard of any commandments.

B. CHILDREN EMPLOYED IN LOCAL COAL MINES

David Davies, aged 16 years
Has been working for 8 years. Has 3 brothers 'None of us have been to day school - but all of us are learning to read in the Sunday school. We learn in Welsh'.

John Hughes, aged 15
'I was never in any day school but I go to the Sunday school. I cannot read. I cannot speak English.

David Evans
'I am a trammer in the Weig pit....I have been working since I was 7 or 8 years old. I have not been in school but we go to the Sunday school. I can't read.'

William David, 12 yrs
'I have been working for 6 months, keeping a door. I can't read but I go to the Sunday School.

William Jones, 15
'I can read a little Welsh, no English. I can't speak English. I learnt to read at the Sunday school. I go every Sunday.

C. EVIDENCE OF CHILDREN EMPLOYED AT SWANSEA POTTERY (Messrs Dillwyn & Co)

John Davies, 15 yrs, Wm Davies 13yrs, Wm Evans, 13
John Davies has been at work for 5 years, the other two for 4 years. They have been at the Lancasterian Free School at Swansea and now go to Sunday schools. William Evans can read a little and can write his name; the others are still spelling.

Mary Rees, 12 years
'I have not been much in school, but I go to the Sunday schools. I can't read.

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